DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 395 426 EC 304 820

TITLE	Inclusion of Special Needs Students: Lessons from Experience.
INSTITUTION	Appalachia Educational Lab., Charleston, W. Va.; College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va. School of Education.; Virginia Education Association, Richmond.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Feb 96
CONTRACT	RP91002002
NOTE	104p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Appalachia Educational Laboratory, P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325 ($9).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Role; *Change Strategies; Definitions; Delivery Systems; *Disabilities; Educational Policy; *Educational Practices; Elementary School Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; Family School Relationship; *Inclusive Schools; Instruction; Mainstreaming; Middle Schools; Models; Program Development; School Community Relationship; School Organization; Secondary School Teachers; Special Education Teachers; Student Evaluation; Student School Relationship; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Collaboration

ABSTRACT

This report describes a study which identified concerns and questions of general and special educators about inclusion and effective strategies for operating a successful inclusion model. Seven pairs of special and general educators in elementary and middle schools comprised the primary study group. Study group pairs interviewed their faculties about their concerns relating to emergent themes: (1) teacher relationships; (2) instruction and student assessment; (3) planning and scheduling; (4) families and the community; (5) students; (6) administrators; and (7) laws, policies, and procedures. This report offers an operational definition of inclusion and provides historical background for the inclusion movement, descriptions of inclusion delivery models, and components necessary for success. Concerns and strategies in each of the seven areas are presented in a question/answer format. Recommendations are divided into those for inclusion implementors and those for policymakers. Also included are a glossary, a bibliography, and four appendices. Appendices include frequently asked questions about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the study group reflections and recommendations form, the roles and responsibilities form, and a collaborative teaching instructional plan form. (Contains about 200 references.) (DB)

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A Joint Study by the

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This publication is based on work sponsored wholly or in part by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U. S. Department of Education, under contract number RP91002002. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of OERI, the Department, or any other agency of the U. S. Government.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL), the College of William and Mary (CWM), and the Virginia Education Association (VEA), cosponsors of this study, wish to thank the study group members who probed their own understanding of inclusion, queried their faculties, and then drew upon their own experience as coteaching pairs of special and general* educators to respond to the most frequently described concerns of teachers about including special needs students in general education classes. Their investigation of the perceptions of others challenged their own assumptions about the needs of general education and special education students and increased awareness of approaches to best meet those needs. *Inclusion of Special Needs Students: Lessons from Experience* reflects their learning from the exchange of ideas and opinions among group members and school colleagues. The time and effort of the following study group members in questioning colleagues, collaboratively planning, writing reflections, analyzing responses, reporting findings, and peer editing to develop this summary of teacher responses to teacher questions are much appreciated.

Chesapeake City Schools
Great Bridge Intermediate Schools

Janis Fehlig
Nancy Herndon

Chesterfield County Schools
Matoaca Elementary School

Nancy Lucas
Donna Schwab

Providence Elementary School

Myla Burgess
Laura Miles

Gloucester County Schools
Page Middle School

Kathy Carter
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Richmond City Schools
J.E.B. Stuart Elementary School

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Valerie Pryor

Williamsburg-James City Schools
Berkeley Middle School

Mimi Bryant
Susan Land

James Blair Middle School

Rachel Cofer

James River Elementary School

Pat Janot

Important to the project were the faculties of the above mentioned schools who responded on several occasions to study group member requests for their concerns as they related to the seven themes of the study. Leigh Butler, school coordinator for the Kempsville Re-ED School in Virginia Beach, provided valuable assistance by developing during her internship with VEA the Inclusion, Past and Present section, this document's review of related literature with a history of inclusion. School principals of all study group members are also acknowledged for their support for the project

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* The term *general* is used within to refer to education or educators who serve the majority of students without disabilities. The term *regular* has been used in the past to describe this program or these educators.

and provision of teacher released time for meetings. A special thanks is extended to three principals who participated in a focus group interview on the concerns and questions of administrators about inclusion—Rebecca Adams, Great Bridge Intermediate School; Troy Maxwell, Berkeley Middle School; Paul Douglas, Page Middle School; and Dorsey Smith, James River Elementary School. Their responses provided insights on the differences between teacher and administrator perspectives of inclusion.

VEA's roles have also been critical to the success of the study group's efforts. Helen Rolfe, VEA director of Instruction and Professional Development, was a driving force for the project, helping with project conceptualization, writing process training, meeting facilitation, group communications, and editing of the report. JoAnn Karsh, VEA organizing director, assisted with the identification of coteaching teams, helped facilitate meetings, and reviewed the draft report. VEA assistance with selected meeting expenses and product dissemination is also appreciated.

Lydia Boerio, Virginia McLaughlin, and Chriss Walther-Thomas of the special education faculty of the College of William and Mary were instrumental in identifying study group members, providing information resources, handling site arrangements for all meetings, and assisting in meeting and focus group interview facilitation. Use of the College of William and Mary student center meeting facilities was beneficial to the group's work.

Special thanks are extended to Carol Mitchell, the Contracting Office's technical representative of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, for her review and suggestions to improve this report. Study group members and group cosponsors also gratefully acknowledge the contributions of external reviewers who made recommendations that improved the publication.

Finally, AEL staff who assisted with project planning, meeting facilitation, study group communications, information provision, development of selected publication sections, project evaluation, typing, editing, typesetting, graphic design, and layout contributed significantly to *Inclusion of Special Needs Students: Lessons from Experience*. The authors thank the following AEL staff members:

Carole Berry
Diana Bowman
Jane Hange
Carla McClure
Marsha Pritt

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inclusion, the practice of bringing special education services to the child rather than using "pull-out" programs to educate him/her in a setting separate from that he/she would attend if not disabled, is not a new practice. Selected schools and districts have long had programs that mainstreamed special needs students into general* education classes when they were judged able to "keep up with" the class. However, litigation over the last decade has caused schools and districts to re-examine their placement practices. Most have begun to focus more intently on the "least restrictive environment," as described in federal legislation, viewing the general classroom with supplemental services and/or part-time pull-out to a resource room as the first choice for placement. This shift toward enrolling more special needs students in general classes has led to changing roles for general and special educators, roles about which they often have little choice and for which they usually have no preparation.

Identifying the concerns and questions of general and special educators about inclusion was one purpose of this study. The study group members, seven coteaching pairs of general and special educators with more than one year of experience with inclusion, identified their own questions and concerns about the practice prior to asking their faculties during the year-long study to describe their questions and concerns around seven emergent themes—teacher relationships, teaching: instruction and student assessment, school organization: planning and scheduling, families and the community, students, administrators, and laws, policies and procedures.

At each study group meeting, members shared the questions and concerns voiced by their faculties and developed written reflections based upon their experiences that responded to these issues. One pair of study group members then analyzed responses and summarized findings for each of the seven themes. By engaging in these action research procedures, members accomplished a second objective of the project—sharing among teachers both concerns and effective strategies for operating a successful inclusion model.

Study group member findings—teachers' answers to teachers' questions—offer a new look at inclusion, one most useful to practitioners. Effective strategies are woven into study group member responses to concerns such as: What are the positive and negative effects of inclusion for the regular and special education students? What instructional responsibilities will each professional assume? How do you resolve conflicts, both personal and professional? What modifications or accommodations will I need to make to meet the needs of all students? How do you provide adequate planning time and When should students be removed from the inclusive setting? The group members' practical responses to these common teacher concerns about inclusion should help readers develop their own programs and avoid some of the problems experienced by others.

Sections that may be of particular interest to those initiating an inclusion approach include Inclusion—an Operational Definition, and

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* The term *general* is used within to refer to education or educators who serve the majority of students without disabilities. The term *regular* has been used in the past to describe this program or these educators.

Inclusion—Past and Present, which provides an overview of related federal legislation along with a review of recent literature, and the Recommendations section, which summarizes advice for implementors and policy makers. The Teacher Question and Response Summaries pose the most frequently asked questions that study group members confronted and offer their insights into resolving problems and improving learning for all students. Further interpretation of legislation is provided in the letter to Robert Chase, vice president of the National Education Association from Judith Heumann of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services of the U.S. Department of Education, included as Appendix A. A brief glossary and a bibliography complete the document.

INTRODUCTION

Inclusion of Special Needs Students: Lessons from Experience was developed for those interested in understanding teacher concerns about and experiences with inclusion—the practice of bringing support services to the special needs child rather than moving the child to a segregated setting to receive special services. (Rogers, 1993, p. 1). The authors, pairs of general and special educators who plan and teach together, used processes discussed below to identify their colleagues' questions and concerns and reflected upon their own experiences to respond. They and the cosponsors of the study, the Virginia Education Association (VEA), the College of William and Mary (CWM), and AEL, expect that their work will offer insights on inclusion not currently available in the literature—teacher action research findings about teacher concerns and experiences. The authors acknowledge the limitation of their study to their own and their faculties' questions, concerns, and experiences but hope that readers will learn, as they have, from the sharing of these perspectives.

Establishing the Study Group

Helping teachers with the increasing challenges of their work is the purpose of each AEL study group. Since 1985, AEL's Classroom Instruction program has cosponsored with teacher associations in its four-state Region (Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia) small study groups of educators to investigate single issues in education and to develop products of use to practitioners. More than 250 educators in 31 study groups have reviewed related literature, conceptualized projects, designed and implemented qualitative and/or action research methods, collectively and individually analyzed findings, and developed and peer edited sections of their groups' final products. Both the cosponsoring associations and AEL announce and disseminate study group publications to requestors throughout the nation. In this way, the study group is designed to serve as professional development for both the members and for the readers of its product.

Since 1986 the VEA and AEL have collaborated on nine study groups of teachers who have investigated topics ranging from restructuring middle schools to teaching combined grade classes to alternative assessment and interdisciplinary curriculum. The 112 educators in these groups have authored publications now disseminated by VEA and by AEL's Distribution Center. Study group members have presented their action research findings at numerous local, regional, and state conferences and workshops and at national meetings and conventions. All members contributed their time and efforts and received only reimbursement for mileage and an occasional free lunch.

In 1994-95, VEA and AEL in collaboration with the special education program of the College of William and Mary (Williamsburg, VA) sponsored a study group of seven pairs of coteachers (special educator and general educator) who teach in classrooms with inclusion. Initially, VEA and AEL invited applications for study group membership from the population of teachers who had participated in the College of William and Mary special education graduate program, collaborative resource teaching conferences, or related research projects.

Each teacher applied as a member of a pair to participate over several months in a study of teachers' questions/concerns and effective strategies relating to inclusion. Each pair described their experience and rationale for participation in their application and secured the support of their school principal for released time to participate in meetings. The collective experience of the 14 teachers selected spanned the elementary and middle school grades and subject areas. Each pair had more than one year of experience with inclusion and were currently teaching in classrooms that included learning-disabled and behavior-disordered students and some educable mentally-disabled, autistic, and auditorially- or visually-impaired students. Most had several years of teaching experience in a variety of special and general education settings.

Conducting the Study and Reporting Findings

Identifying teacher concerns/questions and providing teacher responses to them was the goal of the group. The investigative processes they used helped them achieve it. At their initial meeting, study group members brainstormed their own concerns and questions regarding inclusion through individual and group processes. They discussed the degree to which they believed the questions and concerns raised were similar to those of their colleagues; then they determined that learning the concerns/questions of teachers not practicing inclusion also would be useful to the development of a resource for general and special educators considering the practice. Study group members sorted their own concerns into seven emergent themes—teacher relationships, teaching: instruction and student assessment, school organization: planning and scheduling, families and the community, students, administrators, and laws, policies and procedures.

Over the next several months, study group pairs interviewed their faculties in groups or individually, in writing or in discussions, about their questions and concerns relating to each of the seven categories on inclusion. The pairs then brought their findings to the study group meetings, analyzed the concerns across groups, and agreed on and individually wrote responses (based on their own experiences) to the most frequently mentioned questions/concerns. VEA, AEL, and CWM representatives provided initial and ongoing guidance in the analysis and writing processes and facilitated discussion. Two of the seven categories of questions/concerns formed the focus for faculty questioning, meeting discussion, and response writing at each study group meeting.

At the conclusion of each meeting, one pair of coteachers received all written responses to summarize for that category of questions/concerns. At the following meeting, all members received, discussed, and edited the pair's draft summary. Editing suggestions were returned to the developers who refined the questions and responses to compose a second draft.

Prior to their final meeting study group members received and individually edited all second drafts. Each pair of authors met with another at the concluding meeting to discuss feedback received. Each pair then made final changes to their summary at the meeting and all sections were collected.

Document Purpose and Organization

Inclusion of Special Needs Students: Lessons from Experience is a summary of common teacher questions and concerns about inclusion with responses from experienced teachers. VEA, CWM, AEL, and study group members expect this document to provide insights into inclusion not currently available in the literature.

The first section of the document features an operational definition of inclusion developed, revisited, and revised by study group members throughout the project. The section provides an understanding of the framework in which the study group members worked to share their perceptions of inclusion and to learn those of others.

The Inclusion—Past and Present section provides an historical background for the inclusion movement, descriptions of inclusion delivery models, and components necessary for success. Further information on inclusion-related law and regulations is provided in the letter from Judith Heumann, assistant secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, of the U.S. Department of Education in response to a question from Robert Chase, vice president of the National Education Association. This letter is included as Appendix A.

Study group member responses to teacher questions/concerns and descriptions of strategies teachers have found effective for each category form the Teacher Question and Response Summaries section of this publication. These reflections capture the concern and the practicality important in the continuing interactions between general and special educators and between teachers and students.

The Recommendations section offers ideas, cautions, and encouragement to those who will welcome special needs children into regular class environments—teachers, administrators, and policy makers. Study group member responses to a Recommendations and Reflections Form (Appendix B) were summarized for this section to provide suggestions to educators and education stakeholders at the school, district, and state levels. Data from the form also enabled cosponsors of the project to evaluate the study group process.

A brief glossary of associated terms and a bibliography complete the document.

The study group's product was enhanced by review and critiques from group members, project cosponsors, and external content experts, and by AEL editing and incorporation of suggestions from reviewers.

INCLUSION—AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

A critical task of the study group was to reach consensus on the concept of inclusion. Through individual reflection and group processes throughout the project, study group members revised the definition composed at their initial meeting. The following elements of an operational definition were agreed upon at the final meeting.

Inclusion is always...

Inclusion is always a philosophical framework for educating students in heterogeneous educational settings. Student placement decisions are based on academic, social, emotional, physical, and age considerations. Professionals share their expertise in student learning processes and in curriculum content to ensure that developmentally appropriate education opportunities are provided for all students.

Inclusion is a shared responsibility among teachers, administrators, students, families, and communities to help all students become productive members of society. Teams work together to ensure that a continuum of support services, appropriate resources, and ongoing assessment procedures are provided.

Inclusion is sometimes...

Inclusion is sometimes general education teachers paired with special education teachers in coteaching and/or consultative relationships. At times general education teachers may be paired with other specialists.

Inclusive settings ensure that all students have developmentally equal opportunities. While the time or method in which a task is undertaken may vary, an essential lesson is accessible to all students.

An inclusive placement is sometimes permanent; a student may not need to return to a more restrictive learning environment. However, a full continuum of services must be available. Interim changes in placement are expected, as changes are made in the Individualized Education Program.

Inclusion is never...

Inclusion is never mandated without appropriate support and fiscal resources (e.g., scheduled planning time for collaboration, team decisionmaking opportunities, qualified personnel, ongoing staff development, adequate facilities, etc.) to ensure student success. Inclusion will not eliminate the need for special education support and services. It should never be implemented indiscriminately without consideration of student needs and available resources.

INCLUSION—PAST AND PRESENT

This section provides an historical background for what is currently known as the *inclusion movement*, definitions for inclusion and selected related terms and components identified in research as necessary for implementing a successful inclusion model. Comments and concerns from teachers, support staff, and administrators regarding inclusion will be reviewed.

Background

In 1975, Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, Public Law 94-142 now known as Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This act provided children with disabilities four basic rights:

(1) all children suspected of a disability should receive a thorough assessment of the nature and degree of the specific disability, in a nondiscriminatory manner, and with no single measure being the sole criteria;

(2) all children with disabilities have the right to a free education, appropriate for each individual child;

(3) children with disabilities should be placed in the "least restrictive environment" with maximum effort placed on putting the disabled child with non-disabled peers whenever possible; and

(4) supplementary aids and services should be provided to help ensure the success of the program (e.g., related educational services such as speech, occupational and physical therapy).

To guarantee these rights, two procedural safeguards were put in place: the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and due process procedures for parents (Arena, 1989). When examining the concept of inclusion, it is important to understand that it is not a totally new one. The belief that students with disabilities should be educated in the same setting with their non-disabled peers has been around as long as special education itself. This idea was considered so important it was mandated in P.L. 94-142 (now known as IDEA). Many people believe that the passage of P.L. 94-142 with its emphasis on the "least restrictive environment" clause was the beginning of special education and the idea of educating children with disabilities in the general education public school setting. This is not the case. The movement of "including" students with disabilities in the general education setting dates back to the early 1960s. Maynard Reynolds, a professor of educational psychology at the University of Minnesota, wrote in 1962, "The prevailing view is that normal home and school life should be preserved if at all possible. When a special placement is necessary to provide suitable care or education, it should be no more 'special' than necessary" (p. 368). Reynolds concluded with this thought, "... having a broad range of services is important and ... children should be placed in programs of no more special character than absolutely necessary. There should be continuing assessment of children in special programs with a view toward returning them to more ordinary environments as soon as feasible" (p. 370). Lloyd Dunn reiterated Reynold's views in 1968:

> *It is suggested that we do away with many existing disability labels and the present practice of grouping children homogeneously by these labels into special classes. Instead, we should try keeping slow learning children more in the mainstream of education, with special educators serving as diagnostic, clinical, remedial, resource room, itinerant and/or team teachers, consultants, and developers of instructional materials and prescriptions for effective teaching. (p. 11)*

In 1970 Deno reinforced the concept of educating disabled children in the "mainstream":

> *Might not special education be in a healthier state if it assumed that its ultimate objective is to work itself out of business as a social institution to turn over to the general education mainstream whatever helpful technology it develops so that the handicapped children can be a part of the mainstream? (p. 233)*

The biggest push for changes in the delivery of special education services may have come in 1986, in a keynote address by Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U. S. Department of Education, Madeleine C. Will:

> *Building-level administrators must be empowered to assemble appropriate professional and other resources for delivering effective, coordinated, comprehensive services for all students based on individual educational needs rather than eligibility for special programs. This means special programs and general education programs must be allowed to collectively contribute skills and resources to carry out Individualized Education Programs based on individualized education needs. (p. 413)*

Many claim this speech was the genesis for the Regular Education Initiative (REI), the educational movement which preceded the current inclusive schools movement. Reynolds (1989, cited in Fuchs and Fuchs, 1994), wrote the following regarding the REI movement:

> *We need to move special teachers [of students with mild disabilities] into mainstream structures as coteachers with general teaching staff where both groups share in the instruction. The special education teachers can... lead in such matters as child study, working with parents, and offering individualized and highly intensive instruction to students who have not been progressing well. (p. 298)*

Many people believe REI and inclusion are the same, but they are not. REI is defined and compared to the inclusive school movement in the next section.

Definitions

The term *inclusion*, and the philosophy grounding it, means different things to different people. One current educational movement, aimed at restructuring special education, is known by some as the *full inclusion movement*. However, several forms of inclusion exist often within the same school or district. Some of these variations are discussed below.

Full inclusion. Full inclusion proponents take the position of "no special education and all children with disabilities in regular classrooms [at their home schools]" (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1994, p. 301). Further, proponents of inclusion hope that "eliminating special education will force regular education both to deal with the children it heretofore had avoided and, in the process, to transform itself into a more responsive, resourceful, humane system" (Fuchs and Fuchs, p. 302).

Rogers (1993) defines *full inclusion* as a term "primarily used to refer to the belief that instructional practices and technological supports are presently available to accommodate all students in the schools and classrooms they would otherwise attend if not disabled. Proponents of full inclusion tend to encourage that special education services generally be delivered in the form of training and technical assistance to 'regular' classroom teachers" (p. 2).

The aim of full inclusion is threefold according to Snell (1991, cited in Fuchs and Fuchs, 1994): first, the development of social skills; second, the improvement of the attitudes of nondisabled peers for their peers with disabilities; and third, the development of positive relationships and friendships between the peers.

Inclusion. The inclusion movement, unlike the full inclusion movement, is broader in scope and allows for a continuum of services. In 1993, the Virginia Department of Education defined inclusion as "opportunities for all students with disabilities to have access to and participate in all activities of the total school environment, both academic and social, curricular and extracurricular; students would be educated with support and adaptations with peers without disabilities who are age-appropriate, in general education settings, and in their home school." (p. 7) In 1993, the Virginia State Special Education Advisory Committee in its annual report adopted the same definition for its use of the term *inclusion*.

Rogers (1993) defines inclusion as, "the commitment to educate each child to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the services) and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students)" (p. 1).

Schrag and Burnette (1994, Winter) define inclusion as "an educational context and process that amounts to more than regular class placement for students with disabilities; inclusive schools implement a philosophy of coordination that celebrates diversity and maintain a continuum of educational options to provide choice and meet the needs of individual children" (p. 1).

The overall goal of inclusion, as stated by Stainback, Stainback, East, and Sapon-Shevin (1994) is "not to erase differences, but to enable all students to belong within an educational community that validates and values their individuality" (p. 489).

Regular Education Initiative. The Regular Education Initiative (REI) is the educational movement which preceded the inclusion movement. Rogers (1993) described REI as a phrase that has been "generally used to discuss either the merger of the governance of special and 'regular' education or the merger of the funding streams of each. It is not generally used to discuss forms of service delivery" (p. 2).

The Virginia Department of Education in 1993 defined the focus of REI as "an overhaul of the entire education system with an underlying belief that students with special needs would benefit by the improvement of education for all students" (pp. 11-12).

Webber (1993) explained REI as a proposal for students with "mild disabilities who were to be merged into general education with adapted curriculum and strategies delivered by well-trained general education teachers." Additionally, Webber reported that advocates of REI sought a merger of funding and administrative structures and emphasized that teaching strategies, such as cooperative learning, consulting-teacher models, peer facilitation and teacher assistance teams, be utilized.

Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) noted that the REI had three major goals: first, to merge special and general education into one inclusive system, eliminating the need for an eligibility process for special education services; second, to increase greatly the number of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. (This would be accomplished by large-scale mainstreaming without the current case-by-case analysis); and third, to strengthen academic skills and achievement of students with mild to moderate disabilities.

Integration and mainstreaming. While commonly used, these two terms are less distinct when applied to the delivery of services for students with disabilities. The Virginia Department of Education (1993) defined integration as "actions taken in an effort to meet all or some of the goals and objectives of the student's

Individualized Education Program (IEP) in the general education setting with age-appropriate peers" (p. 2). The important distinction in this definition is that it does not require that students with handicaps receive services in their home or neighborhood school. Mainstreaming is defined as "the practice of providing opportunities in general education settings when it seems that students with disabilities are ready for the curriculum" (p. 10). The important distinction here is the phrase "when the students with disabilities are ready."

> *Rogers (1993) reiterated the concept of mainstreaming with her definition: "This term has generally been used to refer to the selective placement of special education students in one or more 'regular' education classes. Mainstreaming proponents generally assume that a student must 'earn' his or her opportunity to be mainstreamed through the ability to 'keep up' with the work assigned by the teacher to the other students in the class. This concept is closely linked to traditional forms of special education service delivery" (p. 1).*

Points of Comparison

Both the Regular Education Initiative and the inclusion movement aim to restructure the general education and special education frameworks having as their ultimate goal the improvement in delivery of services for all students. The main difference between the REI and full inclusion is that the REI proposed a merger between the two delivery systems that included the funding mechanism. The full inclusion movement would discontinue special education as a separate placement option for students while maintaining the integrity of a separate special education department for funding of support services and training. An additional difference between the two movements is that the REI focused on mild to moderately handicapped students and academic achievements of those students, while inclusion focuses on students with any type of disability and the concepts of belonging and validation of individuality.

The main difference between full inclusion and inclusion is the belief in the continuum of services. Proponents of full inclusion believe there should be no option other than the general education classroom in the student's home school. Conversely, the proponents of inclusion support maintaining a continuum of services and promoting the possibility that the general education classroom may not benefit all special needs students.

Inclusion Delivery Models

Currently, the typical school has one general educator in each classroom with 15 to 30 students, and special education classrooms with one special educator and an assistant for eight to 14 students. One special education class may be for students who spend their entire day in that room, and another may serve students who are "mainstreamed" and only come to the special education class for resource services. Both the REI and the inclusion movements have called for changes to this traditional delivery of special and general education services.

Inclusion models frequently advocate collaboration, including methods such as cooperative teaching, coteaching, team teaching, and consultation. Supportive learning and cooperative learning are techniques used within these and other teaching models. In 1991, Laycock, Gable, and Korinek analyzed and provided guidelines for special education collaboration programs. When general educators work with special educators to address the needs of students in the general education classes, Laycock et al. (1991) state:

> *The primary goal of this type of collaboration is the provision of direct and immediate assistance at the building level. The underlying principle in this type of collaborative effort is that the professionals within a school can combine their expertise to create a multitude of options for students with special needs. (p. 15)*

With so many types of collaboration being utilized, it is important that these models be described.

Collaborative teaching (also known as cooperative or coteaching). In 1990, Chesterfield County Public Schools in Virginia defined collaborative teaching as:

> *a proactive approach to education whereby general and special educators voluntarily agree to maintain joint responsibility for educating all students within general education classrooms. Teams of special and vocational educators, teaching within the vocational classroom can also be considered. Teachers jointly plan and implement curriculum and instruction, supplementing and adapting that curriculum as necessary to meet the needs of the students. This approach combines the expertise of each individual, whose training and experience are very different, to create a teaching team of extremely high caliber. Ideally, heterogeneously grouped classes should be targeted. Services to handicapped students are improved, and academically at risk, average, and above average students benefit from specialized teaching techniques. The lower pupil-teacher ratio increases the available instruction time for each student in the class (p. 3).*

Bauwens, Hourcade, and Friend (1989) define cooperative teaching (or coteaching) as an educational approach in which general and special educators work in an active and coordinated fashion to jointly teach academically and behaviorally heterogeneous groups of students in educationally integrated settings (i.e. general classrooms). Laycock et al. (1991) also reference Bauwens, Hourcade, and Friend's 1989 definition of cooperative teaching.

There are a number of approaches to cooperative teaching or coteaching. The teachers as a team decide which is most appropriate for a given situation.

(1) One teach, one observe. One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other gathers observational information on students in the class.

(2) One teach, one drift. One teacher has primary instruction responsibility while the other assists students with their work, monitors behaviors, etc.

(3) Station teaching. Teachers divide instructional content into two parts. Each teacher instructs half the class in one of the areas; they then switch student groups.

(4) Parallel teaching. Each teacher instructs half the students. Each teacher is teaching the same material.

(5) Remedial teaching. One teacher instructs the students who have mastered the material, while the other reteaches the material to those who have not mastered the material.

(6) Supplemental teaching. One teacher presents the standard lesson. The other works with students who need the material simplified and adapted.

Team teaching.* Chesterfield County Public Schools defines team teaching as occurring when "the general and special educators plan and teach the academic curriculum to all students within the classroom. Teachers alternate presenting segments of a lesson, with the non-teaching educator monitoring student performance and/or behavior. This arrangement is used most often at the elementary level where the special and general educator have thorough training in the types of skills taught." (p. A1)

The PEAK (Parent Education Assistance for Kids) Parent Center in Colorado Springs defines team teaching as involving "two or more teachers, who sometimes have different areas of expertise (e.g., special education and general education), cooperatively teaching a class or unit." (Buswell and Schaffner, 1991)

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* Direct collaboration or coteaching involves team teaching, supportive learning, and complementary instruction. While collaborative teaching is seen as a desirable goal, many schools implement the selected components described above.

Consultation. Laycock et al. (1991) describe collaborative consultation (or indirect collaboration) as "characterized by parity and reciprocity, and shared participation, decision making and resources" (p. 17). The PEAK Parent Center supports this concept. It defines collaboration as "the process that occurs when teams of educators (and support staff) who have diverse expertise work together deliberately and creatively to plan successful education programs for children." (Buswell and Schaffner, 1991).

Supportive learning activities and cooperative learning. These terms refer to types of teaching strategies utilized by teachers in the classroom, as opposed to classroom models which structure the teacher and the classroom. Supportive learning activities are developed by the special educator to provide the students with an opportunity to practice and reinforce skills taught by the general educator. These activities could include cooperative learning activities, creative drill and practice, or other small group activities (Chesterfield, 1990). Cooperative learning is a non-competitive teaching strategy in which children are divided into small groups for learning activities (Buswell and Schaffner, 1991).

As with any method of instruction, collaboration models are not the panacea for working with hard-to-teach students. Reeve and Hallahan (1994) note that "effective collaboration requires more than two educators with good intentions. Participants in collaboration must plan for careful implementation and continual monitoring and evaluation" (p. 10). Chesterfield County's Collaborative Teaching Program recommends that before the implementation of a collaborative model, the participating teachers "must get to know each other." Further, the program suggests that participants "having prior knowledge about a coteacher's personal experience, teaching style, and classroom management strategies, among other things, can be critical to the success or failure of a collaborative relationship." Lastly, the program dictates that "each teacher should assume responsibility for planning, implementation, and evaluation of instruction. Division of these responsibilities should be determined at initial meetings and revised as necessary during the school year" (Chesterfield County Public Schools, 1990, p. B1).

Necessary Components of a Successful Inclusion Model

Many believe that each school district must define inclusion for itself. However, there are certain elements of inclusion which appear to be necessary for success anywhere.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) developed a task force to look at the issue of inclusion. This task force included members from the National Education Association, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the American Federation of Teachers, the American Association of School Administrators, and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. In April 1993, the task force published a framework for inclusive schools. This framework suggests 12 principles for successful inclusive schools.

(1) Vision—The school's philosophy should include the concept that all children belong and can learn in the mainstream. Diversity should be valued.

(2) Leadership—The school principal must be a leader and proponent of inclusion. He/she must involve the whole staff in the entire planning and implementation of inclusion.

(3) High standards—All students must work toward the same educational outcomes based on high standards although the strategies used to pursue and achieve those outcomes may differ.

(4) Sense of community—The school must demonstrate the concept that everyone belongs and ensure that all are accepted and supported by peers and other members of the school community.

(5) Array of services—The school, with district assistance, should provide services for students with any handicapping condition.

(6) Flexible learning environments to meet student needs—While full inclusion is a goal, a continuum of educational options is present to accommodate change in student progress.

(7) Research-based strategies—Faculty should use strategies such as cooperative learning, curriculum adaptation, peer mediation, mastery learning, etc.

(8) Collaboration and cooperation—The use of team teaching, coteaching, and other collaborative arrangements is evident.

(9) Changing roles and responsibilities—School based problem-solving teams should be established to solve individual student problems.

(10) New forms of accountability—Student and program effectiveness measures may differ from grading scale approaches.

(11) Access—Equal access should be assured through technical and physical plant modifications.

(12) Partnerships with parents—Parents are viewed as equal partners in the planning and implementation of inclusive school strategies. (CEC Today, 1994)

In 1994 the West Virginia Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (Greyerbiehl) released its study on inclusion. It developed six basic strategies necessary for successfully implementing inclusive school strategies:

(1) promote positive values and beliefs about students with disabilities,

(2) develop a philosophy and plan for inclusion that involves all stakeholders,

(3) provide training for inclusion,

(4) provide sufficient support to the general education classroom,

(5) utilize collaborative teaching strategies, and

(6) establish site-based management teams or forums.

In 1994, the National Education Association in its *Report of the NEA Special Advisory Committee on Inclusion of Special Needs Students in Regular Classrooms* identified the following characteristics of appropriate inclusion:

(1) a full continuum of placement options and services with each option (Placement and services must be determined for each student by a team that includes all stakeholders and must be specified in the IEP.);

(2) appropriate professional development as part of normal work activity of all educators and support staff associated with such programs (Appropriate training must also be provided for administrators, parents, and other stakeholders.);

(3) adequate time, as part of the normal school day, to engage in coordinated and collaborative planning on behalf of all students;

(4) class sizes that are responsive to student needs; and

(5) staff and technical assistance that is specifically appropriate to students and teacher needs.

Additionally, the NEA position is that "inclusion practices and programs that lack these fundamental characteristics are inappropriate and must end" (p. 13).

Teacher Comments

Rude and Anderson (1992) interviewed classroom teachers, special educators, and school principals who were actively involved in successful inclusion models and who were identified as having favorable positions on inclusion. Rude and Anderson found that classroom teachers, in general, were "resistant to change and had a fear of the unknown." Additionally, "they felt overwhelmed by the additional responsibilities connected with serving students with special needs and lacked special education training" (p.33). Suggestions for addressing these concerns included providing additional support personnel and technical equipment, released time to attend conferences, additional classroom monies, emotional support groups for teachers, a resource team to respond to emergencies in the classroom, time to visit existing successful inclusion programs, and accommodating teachers who do not want to participate through transfers.

While special educators also had some fear of the unknown, their concerns were not aimed at lacking knowledge regarding inclusion. Their fears centered around the expectation of having to "release 'their' students to regular educators who may not have the expertise or the desire for the additional responsibility." Special educators were also concerned that they were expected to become "facilitators" and "consultants" for inclusion practices, yet they did not possess the training to successfully fulfill these roles. Suggestions for addressing these concerns included administrators modeling and rehearsing effective facilitation strategies with special educators, new positions created for existing personnel, and practice in the concepts of collaboration.

Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, and Schattman (1993), reported the following four supports that teachers identified as beneficial to inclusion.

(1) general education teachers and special education teachers sharing their framework and goals and working together to incorporate the student with disabilities into the classroom,

(2) the physical presence of another person in the room,

(3) the validation by the special educator of the general education teacher's contributions, and

(4) teamwork.

Teachers also reported staff-level barriers to inclusion, such as "separate goals of specialists, disruption of the class routine, and over-specialization" (p. 371).

In 1994 as inclusion was being implemented in West Virginia schools, the West Virginia Federation of Teachers published the results of a statewide teacher survey. While only 1,121 teachers of the state's 22,172 K-12 teachers responded to the survey, 71 percent of those responding had at least one special education student in their classroom. The results indicated that "in general, teachers with more than 20 years of experience are most skeptical of inclusion policies and the newest teachers most optimistic" (p.5). Additionally, the survey revealed a number of problems:

(1) Ninety-two percent of teachers responding say that they received less than three hours of training in the support services available to them.

(2) Sixty percent of teachers responding believe that their county's (district's) policy of inclusion has proceeded too quickly, while 65% add that they have not been full partners in planning, implementation, and review.

(3) More than half (55%) of the teachers responding are unsure of the role of parents in the inclusion process. (p. 1)

Major concerns regarding inclusion noted by West Virginia teachers were disruptions in the classroom (76%), lack of classroom support (76%), improper placements (73%), effects on academic programming (70%), lack of funding (67%), grading (58%), and physical danger to students (55%).

Conclusion

The philosophy of placing students with disabilities in general education classrooms, when appropriate, has long been a goal of education. Currently proponents of *full inclusion* advocate the placement of all students with disabilities in general education classrooms with special educators serving as consultants. Proponents of *inclusion* advocate that all students should be placed in general education classrooms whenever possible. However, they recognize that some students will not benefit from that type of placement and that a continuum of services must be maintained to meet all students' needs.

The following conditions for successful inclusion were recommended by several organizations and advocates for special needs students:

- every school system must define inclusion for its schools and community;
- inclusion must be a philosophy that is embraced and supported from the top down and the bottom up;
- a continuum of services must be available;
- teachers and parents should be integral elements of inclusion planning;
- all staff must take responsibility for all students;
- adequate training and funding must be available;
- collaboration and coordination of services are essential; and
- ongoing evaluation and adjustment must be maintained.

Teacher recommendations in studies reported herein relate to their need for knowledge and training regarding students with disabilities and the increased support necessary when working with these students. Attention to these supports early in the implementation of inclusion can lead to reduced teacher concerns, increased ownership of the process, and more openness to students with disabilities and their families.

Educators agree that the commitment to educate all children must guide decisionmaking for inclusive settings. Further, including all children should help educators remember that, "It is often appropriate to use similar instructional principles and methods to accommodate the variety of student needs" (Gerber, 1987, p. 36). As Brophy (1986) concluded, "most students with special needs require additional or better instruction, not a different kind" (p.36).

TEACHER QUESTION AND RESPONSE SUMMARIES

The seven subsections of the findings below were developed by study group member pairs following analyses of group responses to teacher questions about inclusion that were gathered by members from their faculties. In their written reflections during meetings, study group members drew upon their experiences to offer teacher-to-teacher advice to the most frequently mentioned concerns. This advice follows each concern in the seven thematic sections below.

Teacher Relationships

With how many different professionals do I have to work?

There are two ways to answer this question: more than one, and maybe too many.

The term inclusion implies something must be added to, or included in, or changed from the way school is normally "kept". For the purposes of this document, coteaching or collaboration refers to the pairing of two or more people to deliver services to students in a classroom setting as opposed to the traditional approach of one teacher per classroom. These additional people may include the occupational therapy teacher, guidance counselor, school nurse, speech therapist, teacher of the learning disabled, teacher of the visually impaired, teacher of adaptive physical education, Chapter 1 reading teacher, Chapter 1 mathematics teacher, aide, other specialists, or representatives of community agencies, as well as other teachers of the grade-level team.

Members of the study group and their faculties, both special and general educators, expressed concern about the number of persons with whom they had to deal, the concomitant problems of scheduling meetings, and their effectiveness in doing their jobs as adequately as they felt they could if they were working with fewer professionals.

Some of the special educators among study group members indicated frustration with trying to work with several teachers at different grade levels. These special education teachers reported they did not have the time or the energy to meet with the general education teachers as much as they needed, due to their large caseloads. It was often difficult to make a workable schedule to deliver services to the students on various grade levels, considering the need to involve all students in recess, library, art, music, physical education classes, etc. In addition, many special educators have students with disabling conditions for whom they are responsible most of the day and who are not involved in the inclusive settings. When special education teachers are placed in the position of having to work with too many others, a great deal of stress and frustration can result.

Taking all these factors into consideration, study group members advise educators—administrators as well as classroom teachers—to be involved in decisionmaking from the beginning, to be aware of the voiced concerns and potential problems, and to realistically assess the demands required to ensure that inclusion be relevant and worthwhile for everyone.

Should teachers be paired for convenience or compatibility?

Many issues need to be considered when pairing teachers for inclusion, but compatibility heads the list. Inclusion requires that teachers work closely with each other, much as in a marriage. Friction between individuals will directly impact the classroom environment, teaching, and learning.

Members of the study group identified several areas for consideration in forming coteaching teams. Both teachers should volunteer to coteach, believe in the concept of inclusion, and be willing and able to do the extra work to meet the demands necessary for inclusive instruction. Even when the coteachers are willing and able, several other areas need to be discussed to avoid difficult situations later on.

A priority for teachers working in an inclusive environment is that they respect each other professionally. They must have confidence in each other's teaching ability. They need to have similar philosophies on instructional methods, modifications to curriculum, pacing, assessing, discipline, and professional autonomy.

Of the philosophies mentioned above, members of the study group stated that professional autonomy was the most critical. A team of teachers needs to determine definite but flexible roles for each team member in the classroom. Each is an instructor, not an assistant or aide, and must be willing to share planning, teaching, and other related tasks.

Even when teachers are compatible, day-to-day problems may occur. Teachers must communicate well and on a regular basis. They must be willing to learn, compromise, and be open to change. They must be supportive of each other. When teachers are compatible, they learn from each other and build a good working relationship that benefits all.

How do coteaching pairs or collaborating teams communicate?

Members of the study group expressed strong feelings that the degree of communication is not as important as the effectiveness of the communication in an inclusive relationship. Most viewed communication as one of the most important skills needed in inclusion yet believed that most teachers would benefit from communication training.

For effective communication to occur, two teachers must first develop a relationship. Several ways for teachers to develop relationships at school are through peer observation, serving together on committees, jointly sponsoring clubs, and even having discussions over the copier. Through professional activities, teachers can become better acquainted, learn to respect each other, and understand how each communicates with students/staff or manages extra activities. They can share different instructional strategies and philosophies, and discuss how each handles problems or challenges. Skills needed for a strong relationship include being a good listener; able to resolve conflicts; and willing to express ideas, concerns, or needs in a clear and concise fashion.

Communication in planning is essential, and scheduled time for a common planning period must be a priority. Without this, teachers will not be able to effectively plan for instruction, discuss students' needs, or solve problems. In addition to the scheduled planning time, collaborating teachers reported they usually need to communicate informally every day to compare daily schedules, review instructional materials, and/or discuss concerns about students.

Communication with school administrators is equally important to the success of inclusive teaching since much of the scheduling for common planning periods is dependent on administrative support. Administrative support is also essential in communicating the inclusion philosophy throughout the entire school.

Communication among members of the inclusion team must be intentional, not left to chance. Regular meetings to share concerns and successes need to be scheduled, more frequently at first, but continuing on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.

When teachers enter into a voluntary collaborative relationship, they find that they depend on one another to share perspectives on their personal backgrounds in teaching. They will often consult each other on beliefs about instructional strategies, behavior management, homework policies, relationships resulting from classroom arrangements, and many other issues that enter into the management of a successful classroom environment. Teachers all have professional training in education, but their experiences may be very diverse and their educational philosophies may differ on some points. However, they can find support in each other if they take time to communicate on important issues to reveal common beliefs and concerns on which to build a workable relationship. As the relationship develops, teachers share resources.

How can inclusion be successful if the special educator or general educator is not respected professionally?

Successful collaboration between a special educator and general educator often hinges on the issue of who is viewed as the "real" teacher. This perception problem needs to be addressed by the teachers, as well as by school administrators and the universities and colleges involved in teacher training. The current teacher-training programs (graduate and undergraduate) have diverse requirements in curriculum and teaching methods. Special educators are usually trained in learning processes, evaluation, and diagnosis. General education teachers most often are trained in curriculum content, teaching methods, and dealing with large groups of students and parents. Ideally, inclusion combines the best of both preparations in a class, if a good relationship and effective communication exists between the special and general educators. Hence, collaboration for the benefit of all students becomes staff development for both teachers.

Some school systems are requiring teachers in inclusive classrooms to be dually endorsed, which helps to eliminate concerns about the "real" teacher. Study group members suggested that universities/colleges offer training with inclusion models as part of all teacher education. Members stated that the public accepts that inclusion is working and can work. Now educators themselves must become more accepting of and knowledgeable about inclusion. Many stated that no one should be participating in an inclusive classroom unless they do so voluntarily, are free of bias concerning general versus special, have the proper training and skills, and utilize the support made available to them.

Members of the study group reported that the school administrator could foster successful inclusion by providing staff development opportunities, encouraging graduate class enrollment, observing in the classroom, providing consulting, coordinating services, and supporting inclusion as a viable part of the educational process.

Flexibility and a sense of humor are essential for collaboration. Many study group members stated that the need to respect each other's individuality, beliefs, strengths, and weaknesses, is paramount.

How do you resolve conflicts, both personal and professional? How do you deal with emotional concerns, such as resentment, feelings of being overwhelmed, anger, and frustration?

Resolving conflict is a part of everyday life, and a brief look at society tells us that many people have major problems in resolving conflict and dealing with all the negative emotions that can accompany it. One important way to avoid major conflicts is to establish coteaching as a voluntary practice. However, in the real world teachers are not always able to pick and choose their assignments, and personalities do not always mesh. Ideally, teachers involved in the program should be flexible, self-assured, motivated, and, most importantly, willing to share ownership of the classroom. But what happens when less than the ideal occurs?

Learning to resolve conflicts is a gradual process. Some suggestions include solving problems on a day-to-day basis before they become major conflicts, respecting the other person and his/her ideas, keeping open lines of communication, being nonjudgmental, and not taking personally difficult professional decisions. Developing the ability to resolve conflicts will result in both personal and professional growth for participants in inclusion.

Collaborating teachers need to remember that they are in the process together, so choices and decisions should be made that both can live with. Whenever possible, all of the people involved should be active decisionmakers, instead of one person or one idea winning over another. Keep in mind that the goal is to assist the students while meeting federal guidelines. This goal can help those involved maintain the proper perspective when faced with conflicts that must be resolved.

How can you avoid inclusion serving as a "dumping ground" for general education teachers?

Meeting several conditions will ensure that inclusion is **not** a dumping ground.

- Voluntary participation—General and special educators need to choose to work together or volunteer for the experience together, and they should be given an opportunity to accept or decline the challenge.
- Effective communication and problem solving—The personal and professional relationship of the collaborative educators is crucial. Open lines of communication, sensitivity to each other's needs, and a willingness to compromise will be important in those inevitable situations when coteachers do not see eye to eye.
- Mutual respect and involvement—It takes mutual respect and involvement to take on coteaching. Coteachers should respect each other's expertise, be risk-takers, and be unthreatened by sharing classroom autonomy.

Support and involvement among the educators and the building administrator are also critical; this means working together, keeping in close touch, and sharing in decisionmaking.

- Reduced class size—One method for reducing class size in an equitable manner is by weighting students with special needs more heavily according to their number of needs (speech, behavior, learning problems, etc.), or by the number of IEP hours. For example: one pair worked with their principal on class size guidelines. A commitment was made to keep class size as small as possible and to include only students with learning disabilities and average or above average students.
- Adequate collaborative planning time and classroom time—Several time issues should be worked out in advance: the amount of time coteachers will work together in the classroom and planning time.

What are the intrinsic rewards for teachers who participate in inclusion?

Shared expertise between colleagues is one reward. The feeling of division between general and special education teachers diminishes with daily collaboration. General and special educators have a lot to learn from each other. General educators are the content and curriculum experts. In collaboration special educators have a chance to view curriculum implemented up close. Special educators share strategies, classroom management, and specific learning skills. Increased competence as professionals is a mutually beneficial result.

What is involved in working together?

Coteachers or collaborating teachers should decide what each will allow in terms of acceptable classroom behavior. They should agree to back each other and to model a unified front. They should be careful not to contradict or undermine the other.

One teacher provided the following example

> *Students started out trying to play one teacher against the other. If I said, 'No, you can't go to the bathroom,' the student would ask my partner. It didn't take us long to figure out the scam. We agreed that we would check with the other before responding to students' requests.*

Teaching: Instruction and Student Assessment

What instructional responsibilities will each professional assume?

Many group members stated that the division of instructional responsibilities was based on each teacher's strengths, weaknesses, experience, subject knowledge, and comfort level. Most felt it is crucial that the coteachers share their strengths, weaknesses, and backgrounds. The planning of the lessons should take these factors into account. The special educator may be better trained in the learning processes, while the general educator is more knowledgeable about the content and pacing of the curriculum. The coteaching strategy may be either station-to-station, parallel, supportive, one teach/one drift, complementary, remedial, or a combination of these strategies. (See glossary.) Who teaches a lesson is determined by many factors and varies greatly. These factors include:

(1) familiarity with the content areas, subject, or concept being taught;

(2) whether the lesson/topic is new to the students or a review;

(3) whether some or all students need special strategies to understand the concept;

(4) whether the students would learn better through whole group or small group instruction for any given idea or concept; and

(5) the availability of necessary and/or enrichment materials, audiovisual supplies, etc.

How much help will I get and what will the qualifications of that person be?

Members stated that most people will help if approached in a spirit of problem resolution. School administrators may be able to help resolve a schedule or budget problem. The guidance counselor can often assist with concerns about behavior or a family situation. Parents and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) may be supportive and helpful if common areas of concern surface. In general, study group members have found that asking for support is the best way to get it and that most people will help if they have the resources and time.

The model of inclusion being used in a classroom and the student's IEP should help to determine how much time a resource person spends with the student in the inclusive classroom. Another factor affecting the choice of resource people needed to support inclusion is the nature of the disabilities of the students. A few members noted that while it is comforting to have the resource person in the room, when he/she leaves, the students are in the general educator's care for much of the day.

Many group members stated that it would be difficult to share the responsibility of curriculum presentation and evaluation, if the other person were not a qualified teacher. Most general education study group members felt that they would not have been as willing to work with special needs students if the assistance were from an aide. In addition, most members experienced with coteaching, felt that assistance on a consultative basis can be woefully inadequate.

What modifications/accommodations will I need to make to meet the needs of all students?

The curriculum in an inclusive classroom will vary widely from primary grades through high school. To meet the needs of special needs students, as well as general education students, all teachers should read the IEPs thoroughly.

Some study group members have found that a literature-based reading program is easily adaptable to all ability levels of learners. For example, when a variety of literature around a specific theme is provided, students are able to choose books that are developmentally appropriate so they feel successful and are accepted by their peers. The skills taught can be the same for all students, but some teachers will accept lower levels of competence, if necessary.

Examples of successful modifications that members have used with any student in need include:

(1) allowing students to use flexibility in an assignment to utilize personal skills and address individual needs,

(2) enlarging printed materials,

(3) rephrasing text passages,

(4) writing or copying materials on a chart or chalkboard,

(5) taping record materials,

(6) copying notes for students who have trouble copying from the board or taking notes (This allows them to think about what is being said and discussed in class),

(7) allowing students to ask questions daily about a long term assignment,

(8) assigning tests a week ahead,

(9) briefly reviewing material from the previous day's lesson,

(10) keeping parents informed of assignments so they can help at home,

(11) working with students outside of the class,

(12) using cooperative group work,

(13) pairing students of diverse abilities, and

(14) assigning students a task that is within their ability to complete and contribute to the class.

Manipulatives, trade books, and supplies are expensive but important in the inclusive classroom. Materials must be collected and modified or adapted by the collaborating team who may be assisted by parent volunteers. School systems must address the funding of manipulatives and supplies as teachers implement inclusion.

Activity-based instruction with an emphasis on manipulatives and "learning by doing" is critical to a successful inclusion program. Cooperative learning enhances this type of classroom. As team members take turns fulfilling specific responsibilities, all students can achieve success and receive assistance and encouragement in weak areas from their teammates and teachers.

What kind of modifications should be made in curriculum and who will develop them?

Coteachers generally share equally in the responsibilities for teaching, including deciding what to teach, how to teach, how to assess, and what modifications should be included for all students, not just those with special needs.

Equipment may facilitate student learning. One teacher told of a student who could not process multiplication facts. He was allowed to use a calculator and went from a D to an A in one nine-week period. His confidence as well as his abilities developed because the teacher made allowances for his processing difficulties.

Student performance may also improve by reducing the number of questions on a test for a student to prove mastery. Whenever possible, students should receive immediate feedback.

Another teacher provided an example of a student who had an attention problem and couldn't stay on task long enough to answer 10 questions. The teacher planned tests and quizzes carefully for this student. Four or five question quizzes proved just as effective as 10 question essays.

Using sample problems as a starter may help students who have difficulty remembering the processing.

A teacher provided another strategy to aid in problem solving. She gives a student needing assistance a sample problem and asks him to define steps in the process. He forms a "Math Wheel" (Karen Rooney), dictating in his own words how the problem is carried out. The student explains his understanding of the concept in his own words and is able to complete math problems usually with little or no teacher input or reassurance.

Teachers should make learning relevant for students. For example if a student learns best as a visual learner, making posters with algorithms helps a great deal.

Mnemonics may help students remember algorithm steps. For example DMBS is a mnemonic for

Dad — Divide
Mom — Multiply
Brother — Bring Down
Sister — Subtract

What instructional techniques or strategies should I learn to ensure the safety of all children?

A teacher's job is both to teach and to attend to the safety and well-being of all students. While learning styles and academic strengths and weaknesses are important for collaborating teachers to discuss, some study group members suggested sharing strategies to deal with misbehavior and impulsivity. Instructional modifications and classroom changes may be needed. Teacher expectations should be explained at the beginning of school and rules taught. A seating chart that carefully considers placement of any student with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is very important. The general education teacher needs to be informed of any behaviors students may exhibit which need to be addressed for the safety and success of the student and the class. Using common sense, staying calm, reassuring the student, and building trust by reasoning with the student are important. In-depth strategies for crisis intervention should be developed early, and implementation criteria established. For example, one-on-one chaperoning on a field trip may be necessary for some children with special needs. Most members reported feeling more comfortable if the chaperone were a trained person.

How does inclusion impact pacing?

While the issue of pacing is of concern to many educators, no one approach must be followed. Pacing of instruction should depend upon the overall mastery of the content of the class as a whole. Some study group members stated that if pacing is to be at the class rate, then the students included in the classroom must be able to handle the curriculum with modifications being made. Many members felt that slower pacing in the classroom caused the general education teacher to become very frustrated. Parents of general education students may not want their child to be in a class that has slower pacing, and losing the support of parents of general education students can cause the program to fall apart. The collaborative class should not be viewed as a "slow" class, yet all students should be able to progress at their own rate. Continuous progress for individuals should be the goal for both general education and special needs students.

Do I need to make modifications in special needs students' grades?

Most members expressed the view that instructional modifications should be made for special needs students (as outlined in the IEPs) and general education students. Teachers should hold and voice the highest reasonable expectations for every student since students tend to strive for the expected achievements. Expectations for students should be made on an individual basis. Many members felt modifications and adaptations should be made to instruction, practice, and evaluation only.

How are students assessed to see if academic growth has occurred in inclusive classrooms?

All students should be assessed regularly and in a variety of ways in the inclusive classroom. One of the most helpful means of assessment is portfolios. Portfolios in the inclusive class are files with dated samples of student work from all areas of the curriculum. They provide concrete examples of each student's work to show growth or deficiency in every academic area. Portfolios can be very helpful during parent conferences, IEP development, report card grades, and end-of-the-year evaluation.

Anecdotal notes are also helpful. Anecdotal notes are written observations of the events teachers see daily but may forget when trying to evaluate the total child. Keeping a book of notes concerning student reactions and responses to the routine of the general education classroom offers insight into the total adjustment of the student. These notes should include descriptions of social behavior, emotional reactions, and observations about work habits and attention skills. These notes may also be kept in the portfolio.

Regular checkpoint or criterion-referenced tests can be administered in an inclusive classroom to compare the progress of all students on state standards of learning and school system objectives. It may be necessary to administer the test in a non-standard situation for some special needs students such as allowing the teacher to read the test aloud. The results may be used to compare achievement but not as a method of formal evaluation. Standardized testing such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills can also be used for assessment. Testing modifications can prevent reading skills from interfering with testing of other skills such as reading comprehension, mapping, reference, or math skills.

Teacher-developed unit or chapter tests can also be administered to all the children in the inclusive setting. Some of the students may need to have the testing situation modified to meet their individual needs. These modifications may include oral testing, modified language, or small group testing. The results can then be used as part of the total assessment of a child's progress.

Performance-based assessment is also very helpful. This type of assessment requires that the teachers employ authentic situations where students apply the skills and facts they have learned. The teacher gains insight into the higher level thinking abilities of the students. An example would be to give the students a group of objects to measure after completing a unit on measurement. The student receives a score on completing the measurements correctly, as well as on the processes used to achieve the answers. With performance assessment, barriers such as fine motor weakness or memory problems that interfere with success on standard paper and pencil tests are removed. A variety of assessment techniques should be used in the inclusive classroom to achieve authentic evaluation of all students.

How do we assess success or lack of it for each student? Who is responsible for what?

Both the special and general educators are responsible for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of all lessons presented in a coteaching model.

One method is to use a point system for grading. Predetermine the values and make modifications to points based on each student's specific learning styles and needs. Oral assessment can be used on a one-on-one basis when written work does not provide accurate assessment. Program adjustments should be implemented immediately to assure success for all students, no matter at what academic level they are functioning. "We constantly adapt and adjust our academic programs, employing small group instruction and tutors to assist each student to succeed to his/her maximum potential," said one teacher.

What support personnel are needed for appropriate instruction in an inclusive classroom? How much time will they spend with the student?

The child's IEP will determine which support personnel are needed and how much time is needed for appropriate instruction. Student group members described teacher assistants as among the resources most helpful to the collaborative relationship. Many have years of experience with students which enable them to be very helpful. Paraprofessionals should be trained for specific assignments, as well as receive professional development in the goals and processes of the inclusion model.

How are the needs of students with a wide range of intellectual abilities best met?

Teachers reported using strategies, such as cooperative groups, thematic units, group projects, variety in activities, centers, cooperative learning, station-to-station or station teaching, small group instruction, one-on-one instruction, parallel teaching, one-teach-one-drift, daily choral reading, and vocabulary development for every reading and writing activity.

They use a variety of materials, texts, and trade books. Commonly-used equipment items include manipulatives like calculators, computers, and tape recorders. Manipulatives allow visual and tactile senses to be used. Calculators encourage reluctant math students to try, and they challenge the gifted students to solve abstract problems. Computers facilitate success for students at all levels of academic proficiency. Gifted students can do more extensive projects or more detailed math problems. Listening centers for recorded material can assist the slow reader.

School Organization: Planning and Scheduling

How do you provide adequate planning time?

Most study group members agreed that when special educators and general educators work together, common planning time is essential. Group members offered several suggestions. Before the school year begins, administrators should assign the same planning time to teachers who are coteaching. Also recommended was the practice of assigning one special educator to a team of general education teachers at the middle or high school levels. Collaborating teachers should schedule a day to meet for planning and then "touch base" on other days. Study group members stated frequently that a strong commitment is required from each teacher to stick to their planning time to ensure success.

Recommendations were also made for creative ways to give teachers more time for planning. One way is to free teachers from extra duties such as bus duty, cafeteria monitoring, and homeroom duty. Another way to provide time for planning is to provide half days of released time on a regular basis for collaborating teachers. Also, other qualified personnel may cover classes so teachers are able to plan together. Study group members also suggested that teachers participating in inclusion programs be relieved of other responsibilities in their schools, such as committee work, to free their after-school time for joint planning.

Will I be given more planning time?

Weekly planning time for both teachers at the same time is essential. One teacher explained, "When we taught the same class all day, we planned every day, either in the morning before school or in the afternoon. Most recently when collaborating with general education teachers on three grade levels, we have planned once a week at times set by us, usually before or after school for an hour or more."

Another teacher shared, "When we planned, we listed objectives to be taught, instructional strategies and adaptations, and needed materials. We also outlined and often rehearsed the roles each of us would play in each lesson. Everything was written down and copies made. Implementation was cohesive, clear, enjoyable, and smoothly flowing."

Planning time must also be flexible. Both educators must be willing to go that extra mile with patience, compassion, and understanding, until the two become one-minded. This process takes time.

Who has the responsibility for and how are roles determined in planning?

If general and special educators are going to work collaboratively in inclusive settings, they must clearly delineate their roles and responsibilities. The general education curriculum and the identified students' IEPs should guide determination of what is taught and how it will be taught. Deciding who teaches the lessons, communicates with parents, provides support services, gathers and makes materials, etc. should be a combined effort among members of the teaching team. As an example, two members of the study group who have been collaboratively teaching for four years use a planning sheet that has spaces designated for the special and general educators and columns to check-off who is responsible for each activity. This sheet enables the teachers to clearly designate their roles and responsibilities (see Appendix C). Two other members use a form to "interview" their collaborating teachers. This form helps the teachers get to know each other and enables them to have a dialogue concerning their roles and responsibilities in a collaborative teaching situation (see Appendix D). The key component appears to be a willingness to communicate and to share their feelings on all aspects of teaching.

When general education and special education teachers join together to teach in inclusive settings, they initially may teach the areas in which they were trained. For example, the general educator may teach the subject/content and the special educator may teach the study skills or learning strategies. Since the general educator is familiar with large group instruction, the special educator may provide him/her with small group or alternative activities to meet the needs of identified students. As the teachers become more familiar with each other, they may switch roles when teaching. Again, the roles and responsibilities are jointly determined during planning and are not left to chance.

How can appropriate scheduling occur, given **the number of personnel involved and the variety of activities?**

Members of the study group agreed that scheduling and placement of students need to be determined before the school year starts whenever possible. Special educators at one middle school hand-schedule the special needs students during the summer. Using the students' IEPs as their guides, they place students in inclusive classes and/or resource classes. Scheduling needs to be a combined effort of administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers.

How do you ensure that the placement of special needs students is based on their needs?

Study group members felt that placement decisions should not be a problem if the identified students' IEPs are followed. If each school provides a continuum of services for identified students and appropriate personnel are available to work with them, children should not be incorrectly placed in inclusive settings or pulled-out of appropriate settings.

One member stated, "If there is no more space available in an inclusive class, a student's IEP should not be rewritten for convenience." As students' needs change, alternative placements should be considered to ensure continuous progress.

Will necessary adaptations for disabling conditions be made prior to the arrival of special needs students? (i.e., bathroom, classes, etc.)

School administrators need to be aware of the physical needs of incoming students so that staff can adequately prepare the students' environments. One study group member felt that the administrators and teachers should be notified in writing prior to the arrival of special needs students. She suggested that the needs of students should be listed separately and sent to the central administration and the receiving school for implementation in the year preceeding the students' placement so that facility accommodations and faculty planning can be completed.

Should inclusion be a part of the continuum of services at all grade levels?

Study group members stated "yes," if students are placed in such programs according to their IEPs, so that they are in the least restrictive environment with a continuum of services. In some schools all identified students at a certain grade level are placed in one general education class, while in other situations, students are assigned to different classes. At the middle school level, the identified students may be assigned to teams. The driving factor for making decisions about inclusion programs should be the individual needs of the special needs students at each school. Providing a continuum of services and ensuring that students are being placed in the least restrictive environment are required by law.

How do we handle transfers and newly identified students without overloading the caseload or classroom?

Members of the study group gave two suggestions for this problem: keeping the student population lower in inclusive classrooms, and, when necessary, increasing staff to meet the needs of the students. Group members felt that decisions made concerning transfer students should always be IEP-driven.

Will there be sufficient staffing and funding for successful inclusion? Will appropriate training be provided?

Sufficient staffing is a must for inclusion to work. One general education teacher at the elementary level stressed the importance of adequate staffing. She wrote, "If our school did not have the number of special education teachers that we have, we would not have been able to do total collaboration (inclusion) as we have this year." However, the larger issue is one of the inadequate number of trained personnel, i.e., special education teachers. One elementary special education teacher wrote, "In order to be an effective teacher and for the needs of the special education students to be fulfilled, there should be more special education teachers hired, at least one for each grade level."

All the teachers involved in this study group were also very concerned about being required to teach in an inclusion model without appropriate training. However, training varied from one school system to another. One system provided middle school teachers with only one day of inservice training while elementary general education and special education teachers who were paired to collaborate received a week-long training. Some school systems provided ongoing training throughout the school year.

Will I receive training prior to implementation as well as on-going?

Training is important. It reinforces educational practices and exposes participants to research and materials.

Several study group members reflected that they received a minimum of training before implementing coteaching.

However, teachers cannot be "trained" to collaborate. One teacher recalled, "With no training, a few handouts and a great desire we began. Throughout the year we questioned whether we were doing it right. We were going on experience and instinct. At the end of our first year, we attended a one-day training session. Much of what we had been doing was educationally sound!"

Timing training to occur before inclusion of special needs students can reduce anxiety and build collaboration.

Families and the Community

How do you explain the inclusion program to families and the community?

If inclusive programming is to be successful, parents and the community must be fully informed. It is important to include families of both general and special education students and the community in the process from the beginning.

In the view of study group members, school system administrators should take major responsibility for educating these groups. The support of families, school staff, and the community is needed to develop a successful program. If all stakeholders are fully informed prior to implementation, everyone will be involved in a positive way and feel ownership of the proposed changes. The school can present the model to the public in several ways:

- A public forum offers the community and parents the opportunity to learn what inclusion means and to raise questions.
- Surveys of parents and the community are another way to identify issues of concern that the school system will need to address when planning information sessions. Surveys could be distributed through the PTA or on a Back-to-School Night. In addition, surveys may be sent home to increase parent participation.
- Meetings at individual schools can provide parents with information specific to their school in an informal setting.
- Study groups to learn more about inclusive practices can be established at individual schools prior to implementation. The involvement of special and general educators, administrators, parents, and other interested people ensures diversity and helps inclusion become broadly accepted. Perspectives heard from a wide spectrum of people can serve to fully inform everyone and develop support for inclusion.

When it is time to implement the inclusion program, teachers, families, and students who are scheduled to be directly involved should be formally informed about the specifics of the program. One educator suggested sending out a letter prior to the opening of school and inviting parents to an informational meeting. PTA meetings can provide a time to follow up with additional information. If the school year is begun by offering information openly, possible fears about the program may be dispelled. Later on, workshops can be conducted for families in which educators and parents present strategies and specific information and establish support groups.

As implementation proceeds, articles in the local newspapers can promote inclusion in positive terms. School newsletters can inform families all year about inclusion and keep them updated. Students may enjoy contributing articles to the newsletters about their experiences in an inclusive classroom.

More specific and personal information may be shared between teachers and families through telephone calls, conferences, notes, report cards, and progress reports. Ongoing communication at all levels will be needed to keep everyone informed. Effective communication is an ongoing process.

New school programs or initiatives such as inclusion need to be introduced to the community in a high-profile manner. The thought and planning necessary for every aspect of the program needs to be evident to those who will be affected by it. Initial resistance can be reduced by clear information about the need for change and details of implementation.

Once the program is implemented, the community should be kept up-to-date, and periodic progress reports issued. Necessary program changes and adjustments can be discussed along with well-founded reasons for the adjustments. These adjustments can be made in a low-profile manner and will be seen by the community as program refinement if there is honest understanding between the school and community at the start. New programs need both elements: high-profile information and low-profile problem solving.

Should parents be informed of the placement of a child in an inclusion setting?

Informing families of special needs students is mandated by the law because the parents must give permission for the child to receive special education services. The same respect should be paid to parents of general education students who will be in an inclusive class. In collaboration with the teachers involved, the administration should send a letter explaining the inclusion model. In addition, both the general education and special education teachers should inform parents that they share all responsibilities for the students, including instruction, planning, discipline, and grading.

Informed parents tend to become allies and supporters when included at the beginning because they feel they are a part of the process rather than outsiders. Good public relations include communicating with all individuals involved. As inclusion becomes more common, parents will begin to see inclusive classes as the norm.

Do families realize that, in some cases, their children with special needs are no longer receiving separate, small group instruction?

Educators may feel that complete information has been provided to families regarding inclusive service delivery. However, some special educators worry that families may misinterpret the type of services that their children are receiving in an inclusive setting.

One general education teacher pointed out that her special education coteacher was responsible for providing the continuum of services for three grade levels of special needs students. In addition, the coteachers had no common planning time. As a result, the special educator was available to her coteacher for only one and one-half hours per day during the language arts block. These teachers make every effort to meet the needs of all children plus meeting the requirements of the IEPs. In spite of all of their efforts and care, both educators felt they were spread too thin and wondered if families sensed this.

Study group members described educators' responsibilities as:

- fully informing families about service delivery issues,
- meeting the objectives of the IEP, and
- informing school administrators about the effectiveness of all programs.

How can families of identified students be sure their children's rights are protected?

The IEP is the document intended to ensure that the student's rights are being met and objectives achieved with regard to service delivery. The IEP outlines the needs, services, and objectives for the child and should be used by parents and educators as a tool to determine if the child's rights are being met.

As the IEP is implemented, families can stay informed by monitoring signed papers, progress reports, and report cards—all good indicators of a student's progress. As a follow-up, families should be in close, ongoing communication with the teachers. In addition, parents may need to initiate conversations with teachers, and teachers should invite parents to visit the classroom periodically to observe first hand what their child is experiencing in class.

How are assessments and the grading scale explained to families of students in an inclusive classroom?

Families of general education students may require reassurance that grading scales and assessments will continue as they have in the past. Study group members stated that educators should emphasize that special needs children sometimes have lessons modified to meet their specific needs but that all children are presented the grade-level curriculum. Students with an IEP may have some modifications, which are specified in the objectives of the IEP. All teachers, special and general educators, are responsible for explaining and justifying a given grade, in the view of this study group.

How do we obtain feedback from families to evaluate inclusion?

Study group members emphasized the importance of conducting an on-going evaluation of inclusive programs and of gathering data from general and special education students, families, and teachers.

One middle school general education teacher shared the following strategy for obtaining feedback from families. Although she and her special education coteacher received some parental response during IEP meetings, they felt that they needed more specific feedback. They developed a survey that utilized a scale of 1 (more positive) to 5 (more negative). They asked parents to rate the following: "How does your child feel about school?" and "What do you as a parent feel about the present program as compared with past programs?" They also asked, "Have you any other comments?" These teachers reported that survey responses were helpful, and that they planned to expand the survey this year to include student responses.

How do you explain to general education parents why special education and general education students are being educated together? Why should students with special needs be included in general classes?

There are disadvantages to a pull-out model for delivering special education services. When special needs students are instructed in small groups or independently, they lose the benefit of being a member of a whole group. They do not hear the ideas and experiences of their peers; therefore, they have a more limited set of learnings on which to build. Also cross-curricular connections often made in regular education classes are not always made for or by the special needs students.

Special education classrooms are generally multi-grade and multi-ability level. Instruction time is limited because the special educator presents mini-lessons to several small groups, leaving much time on task in an independent learning situation.

Competition plays a part in learning. The special education student does not usually experience this type of learning environment in a pull-out program which individualizes instruction for each member of a small group.

The result of pull-out models can be fragmented instruction with teachers having to fit instruction planned for all students into time segments too short to be effective. Another effect of taking students with disabilities out of mainstream classes to provide services is that these students often feel they are different and not able to learn. Self-esteem often withers with the pull-out programs.

To remedy these problems, programs have been redesigned so that teachers move from classroom to classroom and work more closely with each other. Their strengths complement each other. Schedules are more streamlined. Students have the opportunity to learn from teachers and each other, and as a result instruction is more intensive for all students.

Students

What are the positive and negative effects of the inclusion program for general and special education students? Is the true goal academic achievement or self-esteem?

Many study group members stated that a student's academic success should be the main focus of the inclusion program. However, others considered academic progress and self-esteem almost equally important. The atmosphere of an inclusive class should foster an acceptance of all students, accentuating their strengths while recognizing their weaknesses in a positive way. A student's willingness to work hard, despite disabilities, results in a feeling of belonging. When students make academic gains, positive self-esteem results.

Positive and negative effects on students exist in all academic models, but the consensus of the members of the study group was that the positive effects of inclusion programs far surpass the negative ones. For special education students, the positive benefits include the elimination of labels, resulting in more acceptance from both their own peer group and adults. The positive role models in the classroom expose special education students to and reinforce appropriate social behavior which reduces or eliminates negative feedback from peers. These students also are exposed to higher levels of thinking, problem solving skills, and productive work habits that will assist them in learning how to approach academic challenges in effective ways. The general education students in inclusive classes develop an awareness of different learning styles and have the opportunity to interact and work with students possessing a broad range of abilities and disabilities. The opportunity to peer tutor these students allows general education students to challenge themselves to a higher standard and to excel.

Study group members concurred that the negative effects of the inclusion model were minimal, but did exist. For the special education student these problems include inappropriate placement in an inclusive class when a more restrictive setting with more support for learning is needed. Special needs students, improperly placed in an inclusive class, may be overwhelmed and have difficulty achieving academic and social growth. Study group members reported that often adequate attention from the classroom teacher can't be provided to the general education student when the special education teacher is not in the classroom.

All members of the study group felt that the inclusion model can be an effective way to educate the majority of special needs children when proper placement, learning support, and sufficient materials are ensured.

What factors identify a student for inclusion?

The factors used to determine whether an inclusive class is the appropriate placement for a student can include both general class considerations and specific data for the child. However, the consensus of study group members was that the probable success for the special needs student needs to be the highest priority. Greatest attention must be paid to specific goals and objectives of the IEP and the least restrictive setting in which they may be achieved.

When collaborative inclusion classes are available, general educators need to consider if an adequate number of trained staff is available to meet the specific needs of special education students in the classroom. If this option does not exist in the school system, the general educators need to know if special education teachers will be available to consult with them on a regular basis to provide adequate academic assistance and modifications to assure positive academic success for students.

Both administrative and parental support are key factors in determining which students will benefit from inclusion but low parental or administrative support is insufficient evidence to rule out inclusion. The strengths and weaknesses of the service settings need to be assessed to decide if each placement is the most appropriate, after consideration is given to all programs available.

More specific considerations include the student's past performance record, and whether he/she achieved more in heterogeneous or homogeneous settings. All test scores, including the IQ, reading and math levels, and independent work habits need to be considered to assure that the amount of individual assistance specified in the IEP can be rendered. Additional conditions, such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), ADHD, or an emotional disability must be factored into the final placement decision. The student's IEP must reflect goals that can be achieved in an inclusive setting. The size of the classroom and the staffing ratio should be considered in making placement decisions. However, the teacher's instructional style and the course requirements for students in the class are not sufficient reasons to exclude special needs students because these conditions may be modified.

When all of these factors are considered before a student is placed in an inclusive class, the probability of success for both the special needs student, the teacher, and other students is high. The ideal setting is one that provides each student with academic challenges, positive emotional and social experiences, and a feeling of acceptance.

Are we prepared to alter placements of students if changes are needed during the school year?

The group members expressed a resounding "YES" for the regular review and altering of the support system when needed. This issue is handled differently at various grade levels and in separate localities. Strong support was expressed for applying this practice to the placement of all students, not just identified special needs students. Opportunities should be offered for all students to expand beyond past labels to experience greater academic challenges and improved self-esteem.

Problems that study group members described that may require placement changes included concerns about student success expressed by parents and educators. Some general educators expressed a need to change placements if special needs students were unable to keep up academically with the rest of the class. Also, behavior changes that may be due to frustration should be evaluated and a placement change considered. The amount of extra paperwork, the increased time involved, and the application of government regulations often creates concerns for regular education teachers about the feasibility of providing an appropriate education for special education students in the general education classroom.

The fear of a lawsuit if the placement is inappropriate, and the increased work load of constantly monitoring placements were two of the greatest problems that special educators reported. These two factors, along with the knowledge of how difficult and time consuming it is to effectively accomplish any changes within the school setting, make educators reluctant to implement changes in placement. However, family involvement, documentation, and regular placement review should reduce the likelihood of litigation. Study group members stated that parental support is essential to ensure that children's needs are met.

The study group members stated that safety nets should exist for all students in general education, and the opportunity should be provided for all students to move to either a less or more restrictive academic setting. The alteration of support systems for students should be accomplished in a quick and efficient manner, resulting in effective settings for all students.

When and how should students be removed from the inclusive setting? Is failing or refusal to do classwork sufficient cause?

Study group members agreed that an inclusive setting is not the best placement for every student. Since determining how each student will function in a given setting is difficult, it is critical that all programs provide a continuum of services so choices are available if a change is necessary. Reasons a placement may be inappropriate include: behavior that distracts other students and interferes with learning, harm to the emotional or physical needs of the special needs student, or reasons specific to a student's disability.

Group members advise educators to make no placement changes until a meeting takes place with all concerned parties who comprise the IEP committee. To determine the problem and to discuss appropriate solutions, this meeting should include the classroom teacher, special education teacher, parents or guardians, and administrators. If the child is failing academically, this team can begin with small changes such as modifying the child's schedule, materials, or instruction, or providing some additional instructional time in a special education resource program. One group member suggested departmentalization of the special education instructors. In this plan, each special education teacher takes one or two self-contained periods each day to instruct students having difficulty in a specific content area. During other periods of the day, each special education teacher would coteach. If the cause of the problem is not clear, another simple alternative is to conference regularly with the student to help surface true feelings of frustration or alienation, or simply to offer encouragement. Many problems are resolved with some extra time and interest from the coteachers.

Each school system needs to maintain a continuum of services available to each school. This provides alternatives for children whose behavior is a detriment to their own learning or that of their classmates. If a disruption continues, despite remediation and interventions, a student may need to be moved to a smaller, more contained setting. For example, one collaborative team of study group members worked with a third grade student for the first half of the school year. The student was exhibiting severe behavior problems due to medication intolerance. Behaviors included tantrums, refusal to cooperate with teachers, hiding under classroom furniture, inappropriate physical contact with classmates, and failure to complete any academic work. Interventions began early in the year with team meetings of all involved, including evaluation by the Child Study Team. Although the student's behavior improved with a balanced program of medication and private counseling, the child made no progress academically. By mid-year, the student was moved into a smaller self-contained classroom in which he made remarkable progress with improved behavior and achieved desired academic growth.

Teachers, parents, and administrators need to realize that an inclusive setting is not always the best placement for every child. In order for every child to be successful and meet his/her potential, a flexible program is the key!

Do teachers tend to teach to lower ability levels in an inclusive setting?

Study group members reported that they try not to lower expectations when teaching in an inclusive setting. They described three critical elements in maintaining standards and meeting objectives: heterogeneous grouping, true collaboration, and adequate resources. Members agreed that the most important element in the success of inclusion programs is heterogeneous grouping. All teachers can maintain high standards if there is a proper balance of general education and special education students so that the inclusive classroom is truly a heterogeneous group. The mix should include special needs students, at-risk students, and students with average and above average abilities. The program may be jeopardized if too many special needs students, slow learners, or at-risk students are assigned to one class. Members advised that the best method of achieving this desired classroom composition is to include collaborative teachers, administrators, and other concerned school personnel when scheduling and student placements are determined.

One math instructor in the study group gave examples from a remedial math class she taught. Along with four special needs students, she had a large percentage of unmotivated students, slow learners, and students with behavior problems in the class. The teacher had been unable to raise the level of expectations because of a lack of strong role models within the group. However, another math class with a more heterogeneous balance did not require lowering teaching levels. With proper support and assistance from the special education teacher, all the students in this group were successful.

Both the general educators and special educators in the study group agreed that true collaboration was a key to maintaining expectations. It requires the teachers to address the needs of all students with adequate planning, implementation of modifications, and thorough follow-up.

To maintain standards, providing adequate resources is essential. These resources include scheduled planning time for the collaborative team, support from school administration and parents, teacher input into class composition, and extra funds to purchase appropriate manipulatives, and a variety of literature.

When schools meet these three criteria (heterogeneous grouping, true collaboration, a adequate resources) there should be no reason to lower the level of teaching in an inclusive setting.

How can all students be prepared for the inclusion classroom?

Preparation of all students for the inclusion classroom flows out of the preparation done to present the program to the whole community of students and parents. General education and special education families need specific information about the philosophy, as well as the everyday details of an inclusive classroom. It is important to explain teacher teaming and the role of the teacher assistant (if involved). Students and parents need to understand the shared authority and responsibility of the collaborative teachers for everyday instruction and for meeting IEP objectives. Scheduling can be more complex than the student has experienced previously and needs to be done carefully.

Study group members encourage educators to explain individualized instruction to families and students. In an inclusive classroom, teachers offer the same curriculum with accommodations and modifications so all students are challenged and successful. In the heterogeneous setting of the inclusive class, lessons are presented for a variety of learning styles. Modifications include assignment length, varied testing situations, variation of time constraints, and grading adjustments. Families and students may be surprised at the flexibility of an inclusion program. General education students and their families need assurance that they will not be overlooked or lack challenging academic experiences. Special education students and their families need assurance that they can be successful in this environment.

What will be the ratio of students with special needs to general education students? Will there be a limit to the number?

There needs to be a limit to the number of special needs students in a classroom. More time and preparation are required to meet their instructional, physical, and emotional needs. If students with a variety of disabilities are included, the teacher needs even more time, preparation, training, and assistance.

A ratio of one student with a disability to four general education students is workable, if a special educator will be in the classroom every day and there is at least one planning period together. From study group member experience, this ratio doesn't overload the special educator with too many "I need help" requests at one time.

If too many identified students are placed in a class, too much time may be spent either in instructional or disciplinary matters, which interfere with the progress of the whole class. This situation is not fair or acceptable to the general education student and their families.

Limiting the proportion of students with disabilities helps keep behavior management issues in check. Having students with disabilities in general education classes in and of itself, does *not* increase behavior problems. It does increase the need for keeping students on task, refocusing students, or giving added reassurance when needed. Students who often yell or react when corrected may respond more positively to soft-spoken lessons and pats on the back. The problem of student defiance of teachers often disappears when coteaching becomes the norm.

A larger number of special needs students can work well in the general education classroom when the ability level of the students is about the same.

How do you decide which students should participate in the collaborative classroom?

Coteachers from the current year should decide which students should participate for next year. The decision should be included in the IEPs and approved by the parents.

Often average to above average general education students with no major behavior problems are chosen to be members of the collaborative class. Study group members advise that no general education student should be in an inclusion class two years in succession. Class groupings or rolls are created by the current year's teachers for the next school year. The principal should have final approval for all class rolls.

How do students respond during instruction in a coteaching situation?

At first students may tend to ask the special education teacher for help one-on-one. As rapport builds, the general education teacher can begin to work with students one-on-one as they become more at ease with him/her.

In one collaborative classroom, students who were accustomed to pencil and paper activities and teacher lectures for their instruction began to see math as something they could do, rather than avoid. As this kind of change occurred, more time was spent on instruction and much less on disciplining. Students soon recognized energetic coteaching strategies and activities and gained in skills and self-confidence. Willingness to participate and smiles increased, and self-confidence was evident.

In another collaborative classroom, parents began to show their gratitude and to inquire about possibilities for their child being placed in a similar class in middle school. They commented on willingness of their child to complete homework assignments with little or no prompting, to explain activities that happened in class, etc.

In some inclusion classes the pace of learning may seem slower. However, some teachers commented that they often found they were not reteaching concepts. "Students 'get it' on the first or second time, as opposed to the fourth or fifth time as in the past," said one.

In a collaborative classroom, there may be less frustration on the part of students, which in turn leads to less frustration for the coteachers. "How many times did I radiate anxiety to students, because I couldn't find a strategy that worked?" wondered one teacher.

How do I deal with a very aggressive child?

If a child has frequent outbursts, the following consequences could be specified:

- verbal redirection of the student,
- time out,
- physical escorting out of class to a "quiet/time-out" room or other classroom, or
- when damage to property, self, or others may result, physical restraint using appropriate procedures. Decisions, actions, and consequences should be spelled out in the IEP with **informed** consent of the parents.

What happens when inclusion isn't working for students? How can we legally meet the IEP?

Of course, the test for whether it's working or not is very broad: academic success is only one measure. Social interaction is equally important for many special education students. All of these issues should be specified on the IEP.

If the student is not making progress as a result of the modifications being made in the inclusive class, then the teacher should refer the child to the Child Study Committee or convene a meeting of the IEP Committee to consider all options available on the special education continuum.

Administrators

Do administrators understand their roles and responsibilities to explain and support the program? How can these roles and responsibilities be defined and communicated?

A number of study group members indicated that their school administrators had limited knowledge of inclusion. They reported that administrators usually relied upon the knowledge base of the general and special educators engaged in collaboration. Although administrators did seek assistance from central office personnel, most program decisions were site-based.

Members of the inclusion study group stated that a school administrator cannot clearly understand his/her role and responsibilities with regard to inclusion if the central office administration is not well-informed and accepting of these roles and responsibilities. If central office personnel have not researched or experienced inclusion, school administrators who make site-based decisions to implement an inclusion program may do so without much support or direction. When the decision to implement inclusion begins with the superintendent, this provides a solid base for defining and communicating what inclusion is and is not. However, if school principals and faculties are informed and committed, they can conduct successful inclusion programs with acquiescence from central administration. One way to avoid viewing inclusion as a new educational bandwagon is to provide support, both time and resources.

How should the school staff be prepared for inclusion?

In preparing teachers for inclusion, planning time should be made available to them. Teachers should be provided the opportunity to visit inclusion models. Common planning time must be made available, and voluntary participation should be encouraged in the program's implementation. Administrators are encouraged to provide the staff with federal and/or state regulations for inclusion.

Administrators often rely on those special and general educators with collaboration experience to facilitate training for the inclusion program. Group members stressed that the administrator should be knowledgeable about various inclusion programs locally, as well as regionally. Information on the successes and failures of these programs may be of great benefit.

How much support will I receive from administration?

It depends. Study group members reported very supportive, neutral, and unsupportive administrators. They also provided suggestions on how to ensure greater cooperation.

Supportive administrators can schedule teachers' activities around planning and coteaching time slots and minimize outside interruptions as much as possible. One teacher shared:

> *In the past our principals have verbally but passively supported the coteaching we have done. Before applying for this study project, my coteacher and I decided it was very important to obtain more than verbal commitment. We met with the two principals and secured commitment in the form of substitutes and use of a laptop computer. Since our teaching and planning time together needed to be considered top priority, we even all worked together on the schedule for the entire school.*

Thus, the teachers' willingness to make inclusion successful by devoting extra hours and expertise can influence greater support from administrators.

Will there be adequate support for the inclusive program in terms of technology, professional development, and other resources?

Group members responded that support for inclusion programs varied from system to system, as well as from school to school. One group member stated that support for technology, professional development, and curriculum is adequately provided because of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates. Others mentioned that while support is available, it is usually teacher-initiated and teacher-acquired.

One group member suggested conducting a needs assessment at the beginning of each school year to identify the faculty's perceived needs for professional development. Professional development can be an ongoing process with input from sources such as central office personnel, other inclusion models, and surrounding colleges and universities. The expertise found within a school should be used, but not serve as the sole source of information or training.

In regard to technology, one group member stated that while hardware and software was available in her school, expertise was lacking. For some grade levels, the amount of available time and training limits the use of technology.

Concerns about the lack of support for adequate staffing were expressed. One group member observed that an inclusion program cannot operate successfully based on the current Virginia staffing standards. She felt that to implement a successful inclusion program, a school system has to be committed to go beyond state standards.

How should administrators work with teachers who are unwilling to participate in an inclusive setting?

Study group members have continually stressed that participation in collaboration and inclusion programs should be voluntary. An administrator should balance this voluntary participation with the responsibility of providing a continuum of services at all grade levels and should keep personnel apprised of current educational trends and changes.

If there appears to be a lack of interest in participation in inclusion programs, study group members suggest the following to encourage involvement:

- offer training workshops or field trips to observe inclusion models,
- arrange common planning time so that participation will not be an extra hardship,
- hire personnel with experience and/or training in collaborative teaching or inclusion programs,
- reassign personnel to different grade levels or subject areas within the building, and
- encourage uninterested personnel to transfer to other schools.

How should special needs students be assigned to classes?

It is important to consider all special needs students as part of the general school population, keeping in mind their specific learning needs. For example, one group member suggested that placement of general and special education students be completed simultaneously.

Group members stressed the importance of input from administrators, general educators, and special educators to achieve the ideal classroom balance. This heterogeneous balance should be as diverse as possible consisting of the academically gifted, above average, average, at-risk, and identified students with disabilities—the rule of natural proportions. Finally, a given weight may be assigned to each student based on individual needs. Each school decides on an appropriate weighting scheme determined by the school's population. The number of students in a given class should not be based wholly on a head count.

How should administrators monitor and evaluate the inclusion program?

Several study group members agreed on the need for monitoring and evaluating the inclusion program.

Some recommendations to effectively monitor an inclusion program include an initial meeting at the beginning of each school year of special and general education teachers participating in inclusion and the principal. In a large group setting, the principal can outline expectations, goals can be established, and the needs and concerns of those teachers can be determined. Evaluation of the ongoing program should include several informal observations throughout the year and additional meetings to present and discuss accomplishments and needs for revision. The opportunity to shadow fellow coteachers can provide additional instructional strategies, classroom management styles, and modifications and adaptations of curricula.

Other components need to be considered to effectively evaluate an inclusion program. Administrators should obtain data to compare a student's progress from year to year in the following areas: academic success, self-esteem, peer relationships, and attendance. For example, a comparison can be made focusing on student progress before and during placement in an inclusive setting. This could be accomplished through the use of surveys, observations, and various checklists designed to assist in the evaluation of the student's progress and/or the program's effectiveness.

How should administrators observe and evaluate teachers—as a coteaching team or as individuals?

According to most study group members, administrators should evaluate all teachers using a standard school system evaluation program, ensuring that all are observed and evaluated as individuals based on school policy.

Some study group members were observed and evaluated in the collaborative setting, while others stated that their administrators evaluated them in their self-contained settings. The elements of a good lesson design are important to evaluation in either setting. Although most observations in the collaborative setting are prearranged, it was suggested by one group member that an unplanned observation also should be a part of a teacher's evaluation. This unexpected observation necessitates the teachers' commitment to dual roles in every lesson.

One member reported that her administrator observed informally, desiring to be aware of the progress of collaborative teaching. These informal visits assist in gleaning possible needs and good instructional methods and can result in open and meaningful discussions.

Several group members suggested that teachers who are collaborating should not be evaluated solely on their teaching effectiveness. Other components of the evaluation should include the ability to differentiate instruction, plan and collaborate with one or more teachers, and demonstrate consultative skills.

Who is in charge?

This question may be difficult to answer. One pair reported that although their principal has authority in the building, when they suggest modifications or changes to the program, she says that is a central office special education responsibility. The teachers have had no contact with the central office staff. "When we have problems or successes to share, we have *no* place to go. We tell the principal, but feel it goes no further," they said.

It is helpful to have a central office representative for those involved in inclusion. Coteachers feel that since they are involved directly in the inclusion program, they should be consulted regularly about assessment, changes, problems, and other matters related to inclusion, and that their suggestions should be given serious consideration.

How can teachers help administrators implement inclusion?

One pair of study group members stated that they feel it is important to communicate accurately and sincerely with the administration. They told their administrators what each student's individual needs were and how they should be met, and shared their thoughts about scheduling, class size, and ability grouping.

The inclusion programs at this school started off small and increased to include more teachers and students each year. This happened by discussing and brainstorming on a regular basis. These teachers established roles and responsibilities. Administrators were asked to provide a school-wide schedule that would accommodate this model, keep inclusive class size smaller than others, and place appropriate students in inclusive classes. The teachers were to teach the curriculum, make modifications and adaptations, address general parent concerns, and evaluate the program by communicating successes and concerns.

Laws, Policies, and Procedures

Study group members responded that they are not fully informed of current laws, procedures, and policies regarding the inclusion issue. The responses to the following questions, therefore, are based on study group members' experiences and opinions. Readers are referred to further information on legal interpretations of inclusion described in the letter of Judith Heumann, U.S. Department of Education to Robert Chase, vice president of the National Education Association (Appendix A).

What are the laws/guidelines/regulations in reference to class size, teacher-student ratio, teacher assistance, and funding?

While the Virginia Department of Education (VDE) provides guidelines and position statements for the education of special needs students, little is specifically recommended regarding inclusion. The VDE position is that levels of inclusion are to be determined by each locality.

Study group members responding to the question of guidelines made the following suggestions:

- Each special education student should be considered equivalent to four unidentified general education students. If this ratio is not followed, serious problems from overcrowding may be the result. Class size should always be of great concern when IEP objectives must be met.
- Schools should continue to use current student/teacher ratios. Problems can occur when administrators and guidance counselors believe that having two teachers allows for the placement of more students in a class.
- Overall ability levels need to be considered when forming an inclusive class. There are often students in general education classes who do not meet the criteria for special education placement but still require additional instructional time and modifications.
- Central office personnel should not see inclusion as a method to cut costs through the blending of classes and/or services. Frequently school systems hire two or three teaching assistants in place of a certified teacher to meet special education staffing requirements. Inclusion models are a method of providing educational programming, not a solution to funding issues.

Should inclusion be voluntary?

Inclusion will only succeed if teachers are fully committed to the philosophy of inclusion. The ideal situation for all involved is that the general education and the special education teacher have personally chosen to participate in an inclusive program. When teachers have volunteered, they are more willing to make the appropriate accommodations and modifications necessary to make inclusion succeed. If teachers do not believe in inclusion or were "selected" for inclusion, then the program probably will not succeed. Inclusion entails extra work, planning, and effective teamwork between the general education and special education teachers for the children's emotional, academic, and social skills to be developed to their maximum.

Does a teacher have the right to refuse to teach in an inclusive environment?

Study group members believe that Virginia teachers are not allowed to refuse to teach in an inclusive environment. Two members indicated that training should be provided to move reluctant teachers toward inclusive teaching. The following suggestions were made for administrators to provide training and support for teachers:

- conduct a needs assessment of the types and level of training needs perceived by teachers,
- have the entire faculty and staff explore the issues of inclusion,
- request volunteers who are interested in teaching in an inclusion model, and

- start small, promote successes, and share ideas.

However, one member stated, "Based on the experiences that my colleague and I have had recently, it is not worthwhile to work with a teacher whose attitude toward inclusion is negative. The implications and ramifications of such a negative attitude make for an unproductive educational setting."

"Teachers make a commitment to teach all children, not just those who can learn in traditional settings" was an opinion stated by another study group member.

What is my liability as a teacher in an inclusion classroom?

The same as in any classroom!

The liability issue is very complex. It is one of great concern to all teachers, and the liability in an inclusion classroom is no exception. National Education Association membership offers a tort liability insurance policy that provides protection for classroom occurrences.

What are the liabilities for teachers and schools for students who are extremely aggressive or who have medical needs?

The key to preventing successful lawsuits is to make sure all staff follow policy and procedures. Regarding very aggressive children, any and all "consequences" are written into the IEP and thoroughly explained to parents/guardians/surrogate parents. Every action is spelled out in the IEP, and the parent provides informed consent for those procedures.

When aggressive students are mainstreamed in general education classes without informed consent from the general education parents, problems may arise. If a general education child is assaulted by an aggressive student identified in the special education system and placed in the general education classroom without the knowledge of those parents, liability questions will arise very quickly.

Are we legally meeting IEP times mandated for identified students?

Many of the strategies in an inclusive class involve both teachers working with all or some students. This makes for more effective instruction for a greater number of students. In the inclusive setting, situations may arise that prevent the special educator from being in the inclusive class fulltime, and it is not always possible for the special educator to reschedule the required teaching time due to heavy caseloads. Consequently, special education students may not be receiving the required amount of time mandated by their IEPs. However, it is the responsibility of the special educator to meet these legal requirements. If a teacher has consistent problems meeting the IEP times, it may be wise to call a meeting of the IEP committee to make adjustments.

How can special educators sufficiently meet the needs of all students when they teach more than one grade level?

One way to deal with this issue is to develop the inclusion program with administrators and guidance personnel. Administrators should meet with inclusion teams to discuss flexible scheduling needed to fulfill the IEP requirements. Consultation times need to be considered when determining special education teachers' schedules. Additional suggestions include:

- one inclusion class per grade level,
- block scheduling, and
- teaching assignment decisions based on student population, IEP requirements, and the availability of a full range of services.

Should gifted and talented students be enrolled in an inclusive class?

The trend now in many school systems is to keep the gifted and talented (G/T) students in the general education classroom with modifications being made by the general educator. In the experience of one member, the parents of G/T students often wish their children to be included in the general education setting. More and more parents are concerned that their G/T students are left out of the total learning process. They often prefer to have fewer pullouts and more inclusive settings.

Gifted and talented students are considered by the state as students with special needs. It seems reasonable to assume that they would benefit from the inclusion model. G/T students have Gifted Differential Plans (GDP) developed by involved personnel and parents similar to that of the IEP process. These students often have special needs that would require some type of modification. The GDP can usually be met within the inclusive setting.

Can special education teachers work with nonidentified students?

Absolutely. A "selling point" for coteaching is additional assistance that marginal and gifted students may receive through the efforts of the regular education and special education teachers.

In an inclusive class, teachers need to have equal responsibilities and rights with the students. One teacher might be responsible for teaching a skill or concept that students will take back to their cooperative groups and share with others. When space and personnel are available, teachers need to be free to choose instructional strategies and locations.

Study group members responding to this question have found in their experiences that working with small heterogeneous groups of students for specific skill instruction is a valuable option. These groups often include students with or without IEPs. Collaborating teachers may also reverse traditional large group and one-on-one teaching roles.

What are the certification requirements for teaching students in the inclusive setting?

There is no specific certification requirement for inclusion. Teachers in Virginia are certified in areas of specific disabilities, such as teacher of the educable mentally handicapped, learning disabled, or visually impaired. A possible future requirement could be a course on inclusion at the college level for all preservice teachers. Preservice training in the collaborative teaching model is recommended.

If inclusion is implemented, will I lose my job as a special educator?

No. The special educator, trained in modifying and adapting curriculum and instruction, works with the general educator to assist the student in mastery of content and objectives.

Who is responsible for writing the IEP?

The special educator usually writes IEPs, because he or she is responsible for knowing the guidelines for writing IEPs and keeping abreast of changes. The general educator is involved in writing goals and assessing progress made toward each goal. The general educator also attends IEP meetings.

Who will monitor the program to ensure there is no abuse (i.e., excess waivers for class size, certified teachers, resources, etc.)?

Technically the Virginia Board of Education would approve any waivers. In audits of school systems for implementation of state and federal guidelines, when areas are found to be out of compliance, an opportunity is given to develop an action plan to correct the situation and a time-frame established in which to implement the action plan.

The waiver process can be problematic. It should not allow school systems to overload classes and to hire unqualified or less qualified personnel. The monitoring process ought to provide incentives for following the guidelines, rather than applying for waivers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the conclusion of each study group project, members complete a Reflections and Recommendations Form that asks them to reflect on their personal professional development and changes to their instruction that have resulted from study group participation. This culminating activity also provides an opportunity for group members to make recommendations to future implementors of similar programs and to policymakers. The fourteen members of the Virginia Inclusion Study Group completed the Reflections and Recommendations Form (included as Appendix B) during their final meeting. Part A responses, summarized below, provide insights into the implementation of inclusion that should be useful to those beginning programs at the school or system level or establishing school system or state policy. Part B responses provided evaluation data on the operation and outcomes of the study group process and were used by cosponsors to improve future projects.

Recommendations for Inclusion Implementors

When asked to provide one recommendation to future inclusion implementors, study group member responses were many but united in their advice. They include:

- Start small, but do it. Make participation voluntary. Don't force inclusion on everyone. Slowly encourage participation within the school and district. Work out the kinks along the way.
- Involve teachers, administrators, parents, and community in advance planning before implementation Communicate throughout planning and implementation phases.
- Learn as much as possible before implementation through training, visits to other inclusive classes and schools, and discussion with educators and parents with experience.
- Provide regularly scheduled (daily or weekly) common planning time before and during inclusion implementation.
- Provide frequent and meaningful training and additional support in effective coteaching and coplanning time and techniques for teachers and aides before and during implementation.
- Modify curriculum and instruction to help all learners. Learn from the expertise of collaborating colleagues.
- Review IEPs and student progress regularly. After careful assessment, change student placements when necessary to best achieve progress in academic or social behaviors.
- Maintain a continuum of services.
- Believe in inclusion and be prepared to work hard. Share the common belief that it will work and commit yourself to the philosophy. Get support from administrators. Don't give up.

Recommendations for Policymakers

Personal reflection, sharing of experiences, and review of recent related literature prepared study group members to offer the following recommendations to state policymakers regarding inclusion:

- Provide funding for adequate staffing—teachers and instructional aides—to handle the growing caseloads and increased responsibilities of including special needs students in general education classes. Reduce student-teacher ratios in inclusive settings.
- Define inclusion and develop state policies, positions, or guidelines to assist districts and schools in establishing and implementing programs.
- Don't mandate full inclusion. An inclusive setting is a possible Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), not the only LRE.
- Provide adequate support and professional development.
- Include teachers, parents, students, and administrators in an ongoing study of inclusion, and in the evaluation of inclusion programs.
- Show support. Realize that inclusion will not save money, but will save children.

GLOSSARY

Alternative teaching—one teacher works with a small group of students to pre-teach, supplement, or enrich while the other teacher instructs the large group.

Complementary instruction—general educator maintains the primary responsibility for teaching the academic curriculum, while the special educator teaches the organizational and study skills necessary to master the material. While the special educator may teach these academic survival skills to the entire class, he/she may also teach them to individuals or small groups. When the latter occurs, the general educator offers enrichment activities to the rest of the class. This arrangement lends itself very well to co-teaching at any level, but is the arrangement seen most frequently at the secondary level.

One teach, one assist—both teachers are present but one—often the general education teacher—takes the lead. The other teacher observes or "drifts" around the room assisting students.

Parallel teaching—teachers jointly plan instruction, but each delivers it to half of the class group.

Station teaching—teachers divide the content to be delivered, and each takes responsibility for part of it. Some students may also work independently. Eventually all students participate at all "stations."

Supportive learning activities—the special educator devises these to allow students the opportunity to practice and reinforce skills taught by the general educator. Specific cooperative learning activities; creative drill and practice procedures; and other small-group, active learning techniques, are examples of supportive learning activities. These can be developed by teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels.

Team teaching—the general and special educators plan and teach the academic curriculum to all students within the classroom. Teachers alternate presenting segments of a lesson, with the non-teaching educator monitoring student performance and/or behavior. This arrangement is used most often at the elementary level, where the special and general educator have thorough training in the types of skills taught.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

Letter to Robert Chase, vice president, National Education Association, from Judith Leumann, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, U.S. Department of Education.

APPENDIX A

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

SEP 16 1994

Mr. Robert F. Chase
Vice President
National Education Association
1201 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-3290

Dear Mr. Chase:

Our Office has been pleased to work with you and the staff of the National Education Association (NEA) over the past several months in providing guidance on some frequently asked questions about the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). I trust that the enclosed guidance, in a question and answer format, will be helpful to the NEA membership.

We appreciate the NEA's efforts to be responsive to teacher's needs as we all work toward better outcomes for students with disabilities, and look forward to even more collaborative efforts in the future.

Sincerely,

Judith E. Heumann

Enclosure

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Our mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation.

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) have been asked to provide guidance in a question and answer format on some frequently asked questions about the requirements of Federal law, particularly the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), that are relevant to educating students with disabilities. These questions were submitted by the National Education Association.

IDEA, formerly the Education of the Handicapped Act, includes Part B, the basic grants to States program. Originally enacted in 1975 as Public Law 94-142, Part B of IDEA provides Federal funds to assist States and school districts in making a free appropriate public education available to students with specified disabilities in mandated age ranges beginning at a student's third birthday and possibly lasting to a student's twenty-second birthday, depending on State law and practice. Students with specified physical, mental, emotional or sensory impairments who need special education and related services are eligible for services under Part B of IDEA. Part B of IDEA is administered by OSEP. Department regulations implementing Part B of IDEA are found at 34 CFR Part 300. Throughout this document, the acronym IDEA will be used to refer to the Part B program.

Two related Federal laws, which are enforced by the Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), also contain requirements relating to disabled students in public elementary or secondary education programs. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by recipients of Federal financial assistance, including IDEA funds. The Section 504 regulation at 34 CFR Part 104, §§104.33-104.36, contains free appropriate public education requirements that are similar to the IDEA free appropriate public education requirements. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by State and local governments, whether or not they receive Federal funds; OCR interprets the requirements of Title II of the ADA as consistent with those of Section 504. The similarities and differences in the requirements of the three laws are described in further detail in the response to question 13. Generally, the responses in this question and answer document reflect the requirements of IDEA, unless the question specifically calls for an interpretation of Section 504, Title II of the ADA, or another Federal law.

Additional information regarding this question and answer document can be obtained by calling either the OSERS contact person: Amy Bennett at (202) 205-8555 or the OSEP contact person: Rhonda Weiss at (202) 205-9053; or the OCR contact person: Karen Hakel at (202) 205-9036. Deaf and hearing impaired individuals may call (202) 205-5465 or 1-800-358-8247, respectively, for TDD services.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. A. What does the federal law require and not require with respect to inclusion?

ANSWER:

IDEA does not use the term "inclusion." However, IDEA does require school districts to place students in the least restrictive environment (LRE). LRE means that, to the maximum extent appropriate, school districts must educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom with appropriate aids and supports, referred to as "supplementary aids and services," along with their nondisabled peers in the school they would attend if not disabled, unless a student's individualized education program (IEP) requires some other arrangement. This requires an individualized inquiry into the unique educational needs of each disabled student in determining the possible range of aids and supports that are needed. Some supplementary aids and services that educators have used successfully include modifications to the regular class curriculum, assistance of an itinerant teacher with special education training, special education training for the regular teacher, use of computer-assisted devices, provision of notetakers, and use of a resource room, to mention a few.

In implementing IDEA's LRE provisions, the regular classroom in the school the student would attend if not disabled is the first placement option considered for each disabled student before a more restrictive placement is considered. If a student with a disability can be educated satisfactorily with appropriate aids and supports in the regular classroom in the school the student would attend if not disabled, that placement is the LRE placement for that student. However, if the placement team determines that a student cannot be educated satisfactorily in that environment, even with the provision of appropriate aids and supports, the regular classroom in the school the student would attend if not disabled is not the LRE placement for that student. Any alternative placement selected for the student outside of the regular educational environment must maximize opportunities for the student to interact with nondisabled peers, to the extent appropriate to the needs of the student.

IDEA does not require that every student with a disability be placed in the regular classroom regardless of individual abilities and needs. This recognition that regular class placement may not be appropriate for every disabled student is reflected in the requirement that school districts make available a range of placement options, known as a continuum of alternative placements, to meet the unique educational needs of students with disabilities. This requirement for the continuum reinforces the importance of the individualized inquiry, not a "one size fits all" approach, in determining what placement is the LRE for each student with a disability. The options on this continuum must include the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education under §300.17 (instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions).

1. B. Is there a Federal definition of "inclusion?"

__ANSWER__:

Because Federal statutes do not use the term "inclusion," the Department of Education has not defined that term.

2. A. Federal law requires the provision of necessary supports but when inadequate fiscal or personnel resources means that one or more necessary supports is not available, what does the Department recommend that educators and school districts do? What can be done to ensure that the needed supports are provided? Which agency has ultimate responsibility for providing required special education and related services and needed supports if the responsible school district cannot fund those services?

__ANSWER:__

States receiving funds under IDEA must make a free appropriate public education available to eligible children with disabilities. The provision of a free appropriate public education requires that all special education and related services identified in a student's IEP must be provided at no cost to the parents. The term "special education" is defined at 34 CFR §300.17(a) as "specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including --

(i) Instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and

(ii) Instruction in physical education.

(2) The term includes speech pathology, or any other related service, if the service consists of specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, and is considered special education rather than a related service under State standards."

The term "related services" is defined at 34 CFR §300.16(a) as "transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes. The term also includes school health services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training."

Under IDEA, school districts are responsible for developing and implementing an IEP for each of their children with disabilities. The State educational agency is responsible for ensuring that each school district develops and implements an IEP for each child with a disability and for otherwise ensuring that the requirements of IDEA are carried out. Ultimate responsibility for ensuring the provision of required special education and related services at no cost to parents is therefore with the State. IDEA does not specify particular sources of funding for required instruction and services. Each State may use whatever State, local, Federal, and private sources of support are available to provide special education and related services, consistent with State law, so long as the allocation, excess cost, and nonsupplanting requirements of IDEA are met.

Under IDEA, lack of adequate personnel or resources does not relieve school districts of their obligations to make a free appropriate public education available to students with disabilities in the least restrictive educational setting in which their IEPs can be implemented. The Department encourages States and school districts to develop innovative approaches to address issues surrounding resource availability. Factors that could be examined include cooperative learning, teaching styles, physical arrangements of the classroom, curriculum modifications, peer mediated supports, and equipment, to mention a few.

2. B. Which, if any of the following are permissible uses of IDEA funds: (a) professional development opportunities for educators (b) planning/release time for educators (c) funding all or part of the salary of an additional classroom aide?

Determinations of whether the expenditures listed above would be permissible expenditures of IDEA funds must be made on a case-by-case basis. In general, the expenditures listed above could be permissible expenditures of IDEA funds if the school district responsible for the student's education determines that they would be necessary for students to receive a free appropriate public education, or, if all eligible children are receiving a free appropriate public education, to meet other requirements of IDEA. In all instances, the expenditures must be reasonable for the proper and efficient administration of IDEA, and must be expended with the cost principles applicable to the IDEA program. The expenditures must be included in the school district's application for IDEA funds submitted to and approved by the State educational agency.

3. Which factors legally must be considered in determining appropriate placement for a student with a disability? Which if any factors may not be considered?

ANSWER:

The overriding rule in placement is that each student's placement must be individually-determined based on the individual student's abilities and needs, and it is the individualized program of instruction and related services reflected in each student's IEP that forms the basis for the placement decision. In determining if a placement is appropriate under IDEA, the following factors are relevant:

- the educational benefit to the student from regular education in comparison to the benefits of special education;
- the benefit to the disabled student from interacting with nondisabled students; and
- the degree of disruption of the education of other students resulting in the inability to meet the unique needs of the student with a disability.

However, school districts may not make placements based on factors such as the following:

- category of disability;
- the configuration of the delivery system,;
- the availability of educational or related services;
- availability of space; or
- administrative convenience.

4. Does federal law permit consideration of the impact of a regular classroom placement on those students in the classroom who do not have a disability?

ANSWER:

Yes. Department regulations provide that in selecting the LRE, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the student or on the quality of services that the student needs. If a student with a disability has behavioral problems that are so disruptive in a regular classroom that the education of other students is significantly impaired, the needs of the disabled student cannot be met in that environment. However, before making such a determination, school districts must ensure that consideration has been given to the full range of supplementary aids and services that could be provided to accommodate the unique needs of the disabled student. If the school district determines that even with the provision of supplementary aids and services, that student's IEP could not be implemented satisfactorily in the regular educational environment, that placement would not be the LRE placement for that student at that particular time, because her or his unique educational needs could not be met in that setting.

While Department regulations permit consideration of the effect of the placement of a disabled student in a regular classroom on other students in that classroom, selected findings from Federally-funded research projects indicate that: (1) achievement test performance among students who were classmates of students with significant disabilities were equivalent or better than a comparison group (Salisbury, 1993); (2) students developed more positive attitudes towards peers with disabilities (CRI, 1992); and (3) self concept, social skills, and problem solving skills improved for all students in inclusive settings (Peck, Donaldson, & Pezzoli, 1990, Salisbury & Palombaro, 1993).[1]

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[1] California Research Institute. (1992). Educational practices in integrated settings associated with positive student outcomes. Strategies on the Inclusion on the Integration of Students with Severe Disabilities, 3,(3), 7,10. San Francisco State University. San Francisco, California.

Peck C. A., Donaldson, J., & Pezzoli, M. (1990). Some benefits non-handicapped adolescents perceive for themselves from their social relationships with peers who have severe disabilities. Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 15(4), 241-249.

Salisbury, C. L. (1993, November). Effects of inclusive schooling practices: Costs to kids and organizations. Presentation at the 1993 Conference of the Association for

5. Have federal legal provisions with respect to the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) mandate in IDEA changed in recent years? Have they changed significantly in any other ways?

ANSWER:

No changes have been made in the Federal LRE provisions since IDEA's LRE mandate was first made law in 1975.

6. Does federal law require that placement decisions be revisited? How often? How can a teacher/educator cause a child's placement decision to be reviewed in terms of its "appropriateness?"

ANSWER:

Under IDEA, each student's placement, among other factors, must be determined at least annually and must be based on the student's IEP. Since each student's IEP must be based on the student's unique educational needs, it is the student's IEP that forms the basis for the placement decision. However, a student's IEP cannot be revised without holding another IEP meeting, which the school district is responsible for convening. If a teacher/educator wishes to initiate review of the student's IEP at a point during the school year that does not correspond with the annual IEP review, that individual can request the school district to hold another IEP meeting. Similarly, parents of a student with a disability have the right to request an IEP meeting at any time. At the meeting, if the student's IEP team determines that revisions in the IEP should be made, a proposal to change the student's placement may be necessary to reflect the revised IEP.

Persons with Severe Handicaps, Chicago, Illinois.

Salisbury, C. L., & Palombaro, M. M. (Eds.) (1993). "No problem." Working things out our way. State University of New York-Binghamton, Binghamton, New York.

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7. **Under what circumstances if any would the placement of large numbers of students with disabilities in a regular classroom constitute a violation of federal law?**

ANSWER:

If students with disabilities are placed in the regular classroom, based on impermissible factors such as those mentioned in response to question 3 above, rather than on the basis of each student's abilities and needs as reflected in the student's IEP, such placements would violate Federal law. Similarly, placing disabled students in the regular classroom, without providing them with necessary aids and supports, as reflected in their IEPs, would violate Federal law. If a school district proposes to place a student in a regular classroom in the school the student would attend if not disabled, but the student's IEP could not be implemented, even with appropriate aids and supports, such a placement would violate Federal law.

8. A. **Some educators have been told that federal law requires EITHER that necessary supports be provided for a child in a separate setting OR that the child be placed in a regular setting WITHOUT necessary support services. Is this interpretation of federal law correct? When a student switches from a special to a regular setting, does federal law require that necessary supports also be provided in the regular setting?**

ANSWER:

Federal law does not permit an either/or approach to placing a student with a disability in the LRE. If a school district determines that the IEP of a student who was placed in a separate facility could be implemented in the regular educational environment with appropriate aids and services, IDEA's LRE provisions require that those aids and services must be provided. The entitlement of each disabled student to a free appropriate public education requires a school district to provide the student with the instruction and services reflected in that student's IEP regardless of the setting in which that student is placed.

8. B. Under what if any circumstances may special education and related services be used to benefit non-special needs students as well as special needs students in a regular classroom?

ANSWER:

IDEA funds may be expended only for the provision of special education and related services for students with disabilities who have been determined eligible for services under IDEA and for evaluative and diagnostic services for students who are eligible for, or suspected of being eligible for services under IDEA, but who have not yet been determined to have a disability. However, the Department has advised that special education personnel may provide services to students who have not been determined eligible, or are not suspected of being eligible, for services under IDEA if the benefit to the nondisabled students could be deemed "incidental." While determinations of what constitutes an "incidental" benefit must be made on a case-by-case basis, examples of situations where benefits conferred on nondisabled students by special education personnel have been deemed "incidental" include situations such as those where nondisabled students share study sheets prepared by the special education teacher or have their questions answered by the special education teacher, or benefit from hearing the special education teacher's responses to questions asked by the disabled student. If special education personnel provide instructional services to children who are nondisabled, and who are not suspected of having disabilities or of being eligible for services under IDEA, and the benefits conferred are more than "incidental," the time spent providing those services may not be charged to IDEA funds, and appropriate time-and-effort allocation and record-keeping would be required.

9. A. What is an IEP meeting and what role does it play in decisions about the educational program for students with disabilities?

ANSWER:

The IEP, the written document that contains the statement for a child with a disability of the program of specialized instruction and related services that must constitute the basis for the student's placement must be developed at an IEP meeting by a team or group of persons. The IEP must be in effect prior to the provision of special education or related services. The student's educational placement must be based on the IEP and therefore cannot be determined prior to completion of the IEP. IEP meetings provide an opportunity for parents, teachers and other knowledgeable individuals to discuss the student's special educational needs and make decisions about the program and services that the student will receive. For students receiving special education and related services for the first time, IDEA requires that the IEP meeting must be held within 30 calendar days of a determination that the student needs special education and related services. Each student's IEP must be implemented as soon as possible following the IEP meeting, that is, immediately following the meeting, except during the summer or a vacation period, or in circumstances that require a short delay, such as the need to work out transportation arrangements.

An IEP developed in accordance with IDEA's requirements is a required component of a free appropriate public education under IDEA, and each disabled student eligible to receive services under IDEA must receive special education and related services in conformity with an IEP. In particular, each student's IEP must contain, among other elements, a statement of goals and objectives, the specific special education and related services to be provided to the student and the extent that the student will be able to participate in regular educational programs, and a statement of needed transition services under certain circumstances. In addition, any necessary aids and supports, which could include modifications to the regular classroom or curriculum, to facilitate regular educational placement, must be included in the student's IEP, and must be provided to the student.

9. B. When must IEP meetings occur?

ANSWER:

The school district is responsible for initiating and conducting meetings to develop or review each student's IEP periodically, and if appropriate, revise its provisions. A meeting must be held for this purpose at least once a year. While it is the responsibility of the school district to initiate and conduct IEP reviews, meetings must be scheduled at a time and place mutually agreed upon by the parents and school district to ensure that the parents have the opportunity to attend. The review requirement does not prescribe the precise time of year at which meetings must be held, and meetings may be held at any time during the school year, as long as the IEPs are in effect at the beginning of each school year. Depending on individual circumstances, meetings may be held at times such as the end of the school year, during the summer, or on the anniversary date of the last IEP meeting for the student. Regardless of the timing of the annual IEP review, an IEP meeting generally must take place before a proposal to change the student's placement can be implemented.

9. C. Who MUST legally be involved in an IEP meeting? (i.e., regular educators? if so, which ones? Special educators? Paraprofessionals?)?

ANSWER:

Required participants at all IEP meetings include the child's teacher, an agency representative, who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education, the parents, subject to certain limited exceptions, the child, if determined appropriate, and other individuals at the parent's or agency's discretion. For a student who is being considered for placement in special education for the first time, the teacher could be the student's regular teacher, or a teacher qualified to provide education in the type of program in which the child may be placed, or both. For a student who is receiving special education, the teacher could be the student's special education teacher. If the child is not in school or has more than one teacher, the agency may designate which teacher will participate in the meeting. Either the teacher or the agency representative should be qualified in the area of the student's suspected disability.

In determining who should be the "agency representative," the nature and extent of resources needed by the student could be relevant. Regardless of whether the individual selected is from the building or school district level, the agency representative must be "qualified" as described above, and should have the authority to commit agency resources to ensure that the student actually receives the program of instruction and services set out in her or his IEP.

If one of the purposes of the IEP meeting is discussion of a student's need for transition services, the student must be invited to participate. This would apply to students beginning at age sixteen, and to students beginning at age fourteen or younger, if determined appropriate by the school district. The Department believes that it is especially important for students to play an active role at IEP meetings in making decisions regarding their future. In addition, if an agency other than the school district is responsible for providing or paying for needed transition services, the school district also must invite a representative of that agency to attend.

If the IEP meeting occurs in connection with the child's initial placement in special education, the school district must ensure the participation of evaluation personnel, unless the child's teacher or public agency representative or some other person at the meeting is knowledgeable about the evaluation procedures used with the child and the results of those procedures. Generally, there is no requirement for related services personnel, paraprofessionals, or regular educators to attend IEP meetings,

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but such individuals may be invited to attend an IEP meeting at the discretion of the parents or agency.

Parent participation in the IEP process is extremely important. The school district is required to take steps to ensure that one or both parents are present at each meeting or are afforded the opportunity to participate. The parents must be notified of their child's IEP meeting early enough to ensure that they can attend, and the notice must inform them of the purpose, time and location of the meeting, and the other individuals who will be in attendance or who have been invited to attend. School districts are also required to take steps to ensure parent participation (such as through home visits or individual or conference telephone calls), if the school district is unable to convince the parents to attend. In this case, the school district must have a record of its attempts to arrange a mutually agreed upon time and place.

9. D. In the view of the Department of Education, who SHOULD be involved, as a matter of good practice? How can a child's teachers ensure that they are able to attend that child's IEP meeting?

ANSWER:

As a matter of good practice, individuals who know the student best, such as those knowledgeable about the student's disability, and those knowledgeable about the educational options, should attend that student's IEP meeting. In some situations, the student's peers or other building personnel would be the persons most familiar with the student and her or his needs. Consistent with the importance of ensuring that persons who know a student best attend IEP meetings, several States have enacted legislation requiring the student's regular education teacher to attend the student's IEP meeting when the student's placement in the regular educational environment is being considered.

The IDEA requirement that a child's teacher attend that student's IEP meeting has been interpreted to require that only one teacher must be in attendance, even if the student has more than one teacher. However, if a disabled student is either placed, or being considered for placement in a regular classroom, the school district should exercise its option of inviting more than one teacher to attend the IEP meeting, and authorize the student's regular teacher, as well as the student's special education teacher, to attend the IEP meeting. It is appropriate for any teachers considered by the school district or parents to be beneficial to the student's success in school to attend the IEP meeting.

10. **How does a teacher ensure that needed services are included in a student's IEP? What can a teacher do if she or he is told not to put into the IEP services which the teacher believes are necessary for the child?**

ANSWER:

IDEA contemplates that decisions made at IEP meetings are team decisions. Therefore, there is no one person on a student's IEP team who has the ultimate authority to dictate the services that an individual student receives. One reason for the participation of the agency representative, the individual with authority to commit agency resources, is to ensure that the agency will provide the services that the IEP team determines that the student needs. If a teacher who is a participant on the student's IEP team believes that particular services are appropriate for a student, the teacher should recommend those services during the IEP meeting, which includes the child's parents, for consideration. Once the IEP team makes a decision as to the instruction and services that a student needs, the school district responsible for providing education to the student must implement the student's IEP developed at the IEP meeting. In the example provided in this question, if "an SEA or LEA [were] to direct teachers or other IEP team participants to not include in the IEP special education or related services which are needed by the child," the SEA or the LEA would be failing to comply with IDEA.

11. **What rights does an educator have under the federal law to file a minority report or dissenting opinion with respect to an educational decision with which she or he disagrees?**

ANSWER:

There is no provision in Federal law for an educator to file a minority report or dissenting opinion in connection with an educational decision with which she or he disagrees. Any decision made at an IEP meeting should represent the decision of the IEP team, including the child's parents. Under IDEA, parents and public educational agencies have the right to initiate an impartial due process hearing on matters regarding the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of a free appropriate public education to a child, including educational decisions resulting from IEP meetings. Therefore, if the parents agree with the concerns expressed by the educator and disagree with their child's IEP, the parents may choose to initiate a due process hearing. Similarly, if the school district believes that the IEP team's decision did not properly reflect the needs of the student, the school district could also initiate such a hearing.

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12. Some school districts are mandating that referrals for any classroom support or special need must first go to a "Prereferral Team" which can then delay the referral to special education for months. Is it a federal requirement that a "Prereferral Team" review special education referrals and, if not, how can educators ensure that students who are not yet identified receive a timely referral? What is considered "timely" under federal law?

ANSWER:

IDEA requires States and school districts to have procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating children suspected of having disabilities and needing special education and related services. This requirement, known as child find, is applicable to children from birth through twenty-one. There are no explicit timelines in Federal law for conducting special education evaluations once a referral is made, but a student suspected of having a disability must be evaluated without undue delay. Although IDEA does not set forth a specific standard for the timing of initial evaluations, each State must establish and implement standards to ensure that the right of each student with disabilities to receive a free appropriate public education is not denied or delayed because the responsible school district does not conduct an initial evaluation within a reasonable period of time. The determination of whether the State standard for conducting a timely evaluation following the student's referral for a special education evaluation has been violated must be made on a case-by-case basis.

Many States and school districts have initiated pre-referral systems prior to referral of students for formal special education evaluation, but there is no Federal requirement that they do so. If an educator has reason to believe that a student has a disability, the State or local requirement for review by the pre-referral team could result in an impermissible delay in the student's formal special education evaluation required by IDEA. Such a determination would have to be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the particular facts and circumstances.

In instances where States and school districts have implemented prereferral systems, parents should be informed that, even while attempts are being made by school district staff to alleviate an educational problem in the regular classroom, the parents have the right to ask a school district to evaluate their child if the parents suspect that their child has a disability under IDEA. A school district can advise the parents as to why it believes that it would be appropriate to have the student participate in an intervention program before a formal evaluation is conducted. However, if the school district suspects that the student has a disability, it cannot refuse to conduct the evaluation or delay the evaluation until the interventions have been tried. If the school district disagrees with the parents and does not suspect that the student has a disability, it may refuse to conduct an evaluation. In that instance, the parents may request a due process hearing on the matter of the school district's refusal to initiate an evaluation.

13. **What are the requirements for students to be eligible for federal funds under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)? Does the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or any other federal law qualify students with disabilities not covered under IDEA for special services of any kind? If so, is the method of determining which if any additional services must be provided to students covered under other federal laws but not the IDEA different from the method used under the IDEA? Must the district fund necessary support services if the student is covered under Section 504 or the ADA but not the IDEA (and therefore is ineligible for federal funds under that law)?**

ANSWER:

States receiving IDEA funds must make a free appropriate public education (FAPE) available to all children with specified disabilities in mandated age ranges. There are thirteen recognized disability categories under IDEA, which refer to specified physical, mental, emotional, or sensory impairments and a child's need for special education and related services because of an impairment. Federal financial assistance to States under IDEA is generated based on an annual child count of children with disabilities receiving special education and related services. Regardless of the amount of a State's grant, each State receiving IDEA funds and its local school districts must make FAPE available to all resident children within the State within the State's mandatory FAPE age range. Under IDEA, FAPE means special education and related services provided in conformity with IEPs at no cost to parents. Currently, all States receiving IDEA funds make FAPE available to children with disabilities beginning at their third birthday, and at least through their eighteenth birthday. Whether FAPE will be provided to students over eighteen years of age depends on State law and practice.

Section 504 and the ADA contain explicit provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, but do not provide Federal financial assistance for educational programs. However, States and school districts must meet the requirements of these laws as a condition of receiving any Federal financial assistance, including IDEA funds. Title II of the ADA extends

Section 504's prohibition against discrimination on the basis of disability to State and local governmental entities. This includes public school districts receiving Federal financial assistance as well as entities such as public libraries, whether or not they receive Federal funds.

Unlike IDEA's definition of "children with disabilities," which speaks in terms of a child's need for special education and related services because of a specific impairment, Section 504 and the ADA define a "person with a disability" in terms of a person's ability to function, i.e., whether a person has a physical or mental impairment that substantially affects the ability to perform a major life activity, e.g., learning. These differences in definitions mean that there may be students who qualify for regular or special education and related services under Section 504 but who do not have one of the 13 disabilities recognized by IDEA. For example, there may be students with Attention Deficit Disorder or drug addiction or alcoholism currently undergoing treatment for these addictions who are determined not to be eligible for services under IDEA but who may be covered by Section 504 and the ADA.

If a disabled student were covered by Section 504 and the ADA, but not eligible for services under IDEA, the school district would nevertheless be required to provide FAPE to that student in accordance with the Section 504 regulation. The Section 504 FAPE requirements relevant to educational setting, evaluation and placement, and procedural safeguards are substantially similar to the procedures required by IDEA. Both Section 504 and IDEA require the provision of required services at no cost to the parents. However, under the Section 504 regulation, FAPE consists of a program of regular or special education and related aids and services that is designed to meet the individual educational needs of persons with disabilities as adequately as the needs of nondisabled persons are met. An IEP is not required under the Section 504 regulation; however, implementation of an IEP developed in accordance with IDEA is one means of satisfying the FAPE requirements of the Section 504 regulation. Generally, it is school district practice to develop IEPs for persons with disabilities covered by Section 504.

In the example set out in this question, if the school district conducted an individual inquiry and determined that the student requires supplementary aids and services, e.g., modifications in the regular class curriculum in order to facilitate placement in a regular educational program, Section 504 and the ADA would require the school district to provide the needed supports to the student, even though the student was not determined eligible for services under the IDEA.

14. When state laws or regulations differ from federal laws or regulations, which "take precedence" and how is that decision made?

ANSWER:

States receiving IDEA funds must ensure that their regulations are consistent with the requirements of the Federal laws and regulations, but there is no requirement that State regulations use terminology that is identical to the language of the Federal regulations. When there are differences, the determination of which regulations would take precedence would depend on the particular facts and circumstances. For example, if the State regulation creates a stricter standard of compliance than the Federal regulation under IDEA, or supplements the Federal regulation, but does not conflict with the Federal regulation under IDEA, the State regulation would control. In contrast, if the standard in the State regulation is less stringent, the State must conform its law to the Federal standard in order to receive IDEA funds.

15. Who is responsible for providing medical services to students which are considered "related services" under the IDEA? What is the Department's position on medical services being rendered by non-medical personnel who are not licensed to provide a medical service under state law? Estimates indicate that well over one-half of public schools do not have a school nurse on staff. Does the Department suggest any guidelines on how schools which do not have nurses provide "related services" required under IDEA but which no school employee is licensed to provide?

ANSWER:

Two types of related services as defined under IDEA are mentioned in this question:

1. Medical services for diagnostic and evaluation purposes, which IDEA's definition of "medical services" requires a licensed physician to provide; and

2. School health services, which IDEA's definition of "school health services" specifies that a qualified school nurse or other qualified person can provide.

State law governs whether individuals who provide particular services must be licensed. The Department encourages States to consider using paraprofessionals to provide related services, including health services, to students with disabilities, if doing so would be consistent with State law and State personnel standards that are consistent with the requirements of IDEA. Assuming applicable State law and standards and IDEA requirements are met, determinations of the circumstances under which paraprofessionals may provide required services to students with disabilities under IDEA are matters left up to the individual State.

16. A. What does federal law have to say about allowable policies pertaining to students with disabilities whose conduct in the classroom is a serious problem and/or poses a serious threat to themselves or others?

ANSWER:

Generally, student discipline is a State and local matter. However, when students with disabilities are involved, the requirements of IDEA and Section 504 are applicable. Under IDEA and Section 504, school districts may not remove students with disabilities from school for more than ten school days for misconduct growing out of their disability, without first determining whether the student's misconduct was related to her or his disability. However, it is permissible for school districts to remove a student with a disability from school for up to ten school days without making this prior determination. A school district may also seek a court order to remove a dangerous student if the school district believes that maintaining that student in the current educational placement is substantially likely to result in injury to that student or to others. In addition, under IDEA and Section 504, school districts may use short-term measures, short of a change in placement, if to do so would not be inconsistent with the student's IEP, and in accordance with rules that are applied evenhandedly to all students.

Under IDEA and Section 504, a removal of a student from school for more than ten school days constitutes a change in placement, which cannot be implemented without first determining whether the student's misconduct is related to the student's disability. Section 504 also requires that a reevaluation of the student be conducted prior to any change in placement. Under IDEA and Section 504, the disability-relatedness determination must be made by a group of persons, not just by any one individual, which includes persons personally familiar with the student. If the student's misconduct is determined to be related to the student's disability, the procedural safeguard requirements of IDEA and Section 504 require that the parents must be given written notice of the proposal to change the student's placement and informed that they have the right to request a due process hearing. Under IDEA and Section 504, there is no requirement that parental consent be obtained before a school district can implement a proposal to change a student's placement, regardless of whether the proposal is made for disciplinary reasons. However, some States may require that parental consent be obtained under these circumstances.

Regardless of whether the State requires that parental consent be obtained before a proposal to change the student's placement, if the parents request an impartial due process hearing under IDEA, the "stay-put" or "pendency" provision requires that the student remain in the then current educational placement unless the parents and school district agree on an interim placement. School districts that are unable to persuade parents to agree on an interim placement also may seek a court order to remove a student from school, as described above.

Students with disabilities may be subject to long-term suspension or expulsion only for misconduct that has been determined to be unrelated to the student's disability. The nondiscrimination provisions of Section 504 permit school districts to discontinue educational services for disabled students subject to long term suspension or expulsion from school for non-disability-related misconduct in the same manner as educational services could be discontinued for nondisabled students. However, IDEA requires that educational services must continue for these students during periods of disciplinary removal that exceed ten school days.

16. B. When an inclusive placement is not working (in the opinion of the professional staff) and the placement is disrupting the learning of the rest of the class, what recourse does the school have against the "stay-put" provisions of the IDEA, if the parent will not consent to a change in placement? What must the district document? Do permissible policies differ for students with disabilities as opposed to students without disabilities, and, if so, how?

ANSWER:

In the example that you provide, the school district should review the current placement to determine whether additional aids and supports can be provided or determine whether a change in placement is appropriate. If the parents disagree with the recommended change in placement and initiate a due process hearing, and if the school district is unable to persuade the parents to agree on an interim placement, IDEA's "pendency" or "stay-put" provision would require that the student remain in the current educational placement until the completion of all proceedings. While school districts can attempt to obtain a court order under these circumstances, the school district would

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have to demonstrate to the court that maintaining the student in the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others. Disruption of the learning of classmates may not be sufficient to satisfy this burden. For nondisabled students, policies differ, in that IDEA and Section 504 requirements, such as the procedural safeguards, do not apply.

17. What information does the Department have on professional development/training approaches which special and regular educators and paraprofessionals have found helpful in implementing inclusion and other educational practices which address the needs of special needs students?

ANSWER:

The Department has supported a variety of professional development and training projects (e.g., preservice, inservice, school restructuring projects) that address the needs of students with disabilities in inclusive schools. In addition, the Department has financed Statewide Systems Change projects which support changing the setting for delivery of educational services from separate settings to general education settings in the student's neighborhood school. Numerous materials and products have been developed by these projects which have focused on strategies that support collaborative planning and problem solving, site based control, curriculum and technological adaptations and modifications, parent and family involvement, and the creative use of human and fiscal resources. These projects have underscored the importance of timely access to resources (e.g., people, materials, information, technology) when they are needed.

Educators can obtain further information regarding these programs by contacting:

National Information Center for
Children and Youth with Disabilities
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, D.C. 20013-1492
Telephone: 1-800-695-0285
(Deaf and hearing-impaired individuals may
also call this number for TDD services)

Consortium on Inclusive Schooling Practices
Allegheny Singer Research Institute
320 E. North Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA. 15212
Telephone: (412) 359-1600

California Research Institute
on the Integration of Students with Severe
  Disabilities
San Francisco State University
1415 Tapia Drive
San Francisco, California 94132
Telephone: (415) 338-7847-48

18. **The Administration through its GOALs 2000 legislation is encouraging all school districts voluntarily to adopt high achievement standards for all students. When--if at all--is it appropriate to modify an achievement standard for a student with a disability or any other student, or modify the expectation of the level of attainment of a given standard? If it is appropriate in some contexts, what guidelines and/or resources does the Department suggest to the educators?**

ANSWER:

One of the stated purposes of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act is to provide for the establishment of high-quality, internationally competitive content and student performance standards and strategies that all students will be expected to achieve. The term "all students" is defined to include students with disabilities, as well as students from a broad range of other diverse backgrounds and circumstances.

Under IDEA and Section 504, school districts must provide an appropriate education consistent with the individual needs of students with disabilities, and must make individualized determinations about a student's educational needs. Goals 2000 calls for a study of the inclusion of students with disabilities in school reform activities assisted under that Act, including "an evaluation of the National Education Goals and objectives, curriculum reforms, standards, and other programs and activities intended to achieve those goals."

The Department will be providing additional guidance on Goals 2000 as it affects the education of students with disabilities.

19. Are there any guidelines or resources available to educators on how to modify a student achievement assessment where a student's disability prevents the student from being able to perform the assessment in the same way as other students in the class?

ANSWER:

Section 504 requires that testing of students with disabilities be fair and reflect their true abilities. Consequently, any necessary testing modifications must be made for students with disabilities, as appropriate. As with other matters relating to the education of students with disabilities, these determinations must be made on an individual basis in light of each student's particular abilities and needs. While some States have enacted rules or guidelines that govern testing modifications for students with disabilities, other States leave these determinations to participants on each student's IEP team. If testing modifications are included in a student's IEP or other individualized educational plan under Section 504, they must be provided to the student.

The National Center on Educational Outcomes has reference materials on various testing modifications that may be considered in individual cases. As a result of a special study funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, the National Center on Educational Outcomes has conducted research on existing guidelines for modifications through a national survey of state assessment practices and a literature survey. Their findings identify four major types of modifications used in state and national assessments that educators may want to consider in modifying tests for disabled students: alternative presentation modes, alternative response modes, alternative settings, and alternative time allotments and scheduling.

Alternative presentations include modifications such as Braille versions of test, large print editions, and orally presented instructions. Alternative response modes include the use of computers for written answers, sign language, and the use of recorders. Setting variations that are often allowed include small group or individual assessments, or in rare instances, home-based assessments. Flexibility in time allotments and scheduling also are used for some students with disabilities. Further information can be obtained from:

National Center on Educational Outcomes
350 Elliot Hall
75 East River Road
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
Tel: 612-626-1530 TDD: 612-624-4848

20. Studies have shown that achievement test scores results for approximately 40-50% of all students with disabilities are simply not reported by schools and/or districts for some national surveys of student achievement. When if ever is it permissible for a school or a district to NOT report the results of achievement tests or assessments of students with disabilities (or other students) to local, state or federal authorities?

ANSWER:

Generally, it is not permissible to exclude students with disabilities from tests or from reports of results. Whether the failure to report scores for students with disabilities constitutes discrimination on the basis of disability, and thus a violation of Section 504 and the ADA depends on the particular facts and circumstances of each case, such as what is being measured. The Department anticipates addressing this issue, as the need arises, in various contexts, including in national assessments, other tests/assessments, and in the enforcement of nondiscrimination laws.

21. What are the relationships between the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act? What if any practical implications other than those addressed in question 13 do the differences in these laws have for educators?

ANSWER:

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces five Federal laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race or national origin, sex, disability and age. Four of these laws apply specifically to recipients of Federal financial assistance (the fifth applies to all activities of State and local governments, including those that do not receive Federal financial assistance). While Section 504 applies to entities that receive or benefit from Federal financial assistance, the ADA's reach is broader. It extends Section 504's prohibition against discrimination on the basis of disability to all activities of State and local governments, including those that do not receive Federal financial assistance and therefore are not covered by Section 504. Since standards for compliance with the ADA are generally the same as those of Section 504, this has little practical consequence for public school districts, all of which are recipients of Federal financial assistance. Generally, the same complaint procedures apply for Section 504 and Title II complaints.

Individuals with questions about Section 504 and Title II of the ADA should contact the relevant Office for Civil Rights (OCR) regional office, the addresses and telephone numbers of which are provided in the appendix to this document, or the OCR contact person listed in this document for further assistance. Individuals with questions about the implementation of IDEA in your State should contact the State director of special education in your State Department of Education, or the OSERS or OSEP contact persons listed in this document, for further assistance. The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the State directors of special education are provided in the appendix to this document.

22. How can educators report practices to the U.S. Department of Education which are believed to be out of compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act? Does the Department place equal emphasis in its monitoring activities on inappropriate inclusion as it does on inappropriate non-inclusion?

ANSWER:

Yes. In enforcing the free appropriate public education requirements of IDEA and Section 504, the Department must ensure that States and school districts comply with their responsibilities to educate students with disabilities in the LRE in accordance with the requirements of those laws. If the Department determines through monitoring or other compliance activities that these requirements are being misapplied, it will take whatever measures are deemed necessary to achieve compliance.

When OSEP monitors States' compliance with the requirements of IDEA, OSEP will examine whether LRE requirements are being properly implemented at the local level. If OSEP identifies instances of inappropriate placement of students with disabilities in regular educational settings, OSEP will examine whether adequate appropriate aids and supports have been provided to the affected students in those settings.

There are mechanisms under IDEA, Section 504, and the ADA for individuals and organizations subject to the protections of those laws to file complaints alleging that school districts have not educated students with disabilities in the LRE. Because IDEA is a State-administered program, complaints by individuals or organizations alleging violations of IDEA are not investigated directly by OSEP or OSERS but are referred to the relevant State Department of Education for resolution. A copy of the State complaint procedures in the IDEA regulations and a brief explanation of those procedures is provided in the appendix to this document. Individuals or organizations alleging discrimination on the basis of disability by a public school district in violation of Section 504 or Title II of the ADA may file a complaint with the relevant OCR regional office in accordance with the procedures described in the Appendix to this document.

23. What general precautions should educators take in order to minimize their exposure to contagious diseases?

ANSWER:

Educators are in a position to have a positive impact on measures to contain the spread of contagious diseases among students and staff in schools by preventive behaviors which include the following: (1) use of universal precautions, such as hand-washing after situations that bring them in contact with body secretions; (2) immediate referral to the school health resource for any physical and/or behavioral changes that are of concern; (3) positive reinforcement for health behavior for children as part of their curriculum experience; and (4) encouraging inservice updating on infectious disease and prevention for all school personnel.

24. Does the Department have any recommendations or suggestions on what can be done to reduce the paperwork burden on educators which results from federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies? Does federal law identify any specific forms which must be completed or designate any particular party which must complete them?

ANSWER:

The Department is sensitive to the paperwork burdens that its compliance responsibilities may involve. The collection of general information from schools is carefully scrutinized by the Department, as well as the Office of Management and Budget. The Department is constantly reviewing its regulations to reduce paperwork burdens on school districts. Most of the paperwork responsibilities that result from Federal reporting requirements are the responsibility of State Departments of Education rather than educators at the local school district level. In many instances, there are paperwork requirements that are burdensome for educators that are not specifically the result of a Federal requirement. Therefore, consultation at the State and local levels may be helpful in determining whether any of these paperwork requirements can be reduced or eliminated.

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Federal regulations implementing civil rights statutes require recipients of Federal financial assistance to submit to the Department timely and accurate compliance reports at such times specified by the Department, which reports must contain information necessary for the Department to ascertain the recipient's compliance. Accordingly, OCR conducts a civil rights survey of elementary and secondary schools every two years, but only for a sample rather than for all schools. The survey forms must be completed by officials in those school districts selected for inclusion in the survey. The content of each survey is developed in consultation with state and school officials.

APPENDIX B

VEA-AEL-CWM INCLUSION STUDY GROUP REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FORM

MAY 1995

APPENDIX B

VEA - AEL - CWM INCLUSION STUDY GROUP
REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FORM
May 1995

AEL staff request your assistance in evaluating services to this study group, improving assistance to future study groups, and in assessing the impact of study group activities during 1994-95. Please take a few moments to reflect on each question and provide your response, using the back of sheets, if necessary. All responses will be aggregated for analysis and reporting and no identification will be assigned to any statement. Each member of a coteaching pair should complete a Form.

Part A

1. How, if at all, has your attitude toward inclusion of special needs children in regular classrooms changed during your involvement with the study group?

2. How, if at all, has your instruction, student assessment, and/or grading changed (due to inclusion) during your involvement with the study group?

3. What one recommendation would you provide to educators wishing to implement inclusion in their classroom or school?

4. What one recommendation would you make to state-level policymakers (legislatures, state departments of education, school boards, educator associations) regarding inclusion?

5. Through your reading, inquiry with faculty members, reflection, writing, data analysis, reporting, editing, and other study group experiences, what have you learned about conducting research?

6. In what ways, if any, have you found participation in the study group to be professionally rewarding? What strengths and weaknesses would you identify about the group's work?

7. How do you plan to use what you have learned from the study group experience?

8. How could AEL's, VEA's, and CWM's assistance to the study group be improved?

9. Dissemination of the products of every study group is important to its sponsors. Please suggest ways in which you can share your group's product or the knowledge gained from study group experience with others. How might the sponsors assist you in doing this?

Part B

Please circle the appropriate ratings below.

		Agree				Disagree
Evaluation of development of personal knowledge						
1.	The topic of inclusion was worth exploring.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	My knowledge and understanding of the topic have increased.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	The information provided was interesting and worthwhile.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	The quantity of information provided was adequate.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	The information learned in the project is useful to me professionally.	5	4	3	2	1
Evaluation as a professional development experience						
1.	My group interaction skills improved.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	My research skills (inquiry, data analysis, synthesis) improved.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	My writing skills improved.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	My editing skills improved.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	The study group experience has affected my job performance positively.	5	4	3	2	1
Evaluation of study group activities						
1.	The goals were clearly defined.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	The goals were met.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	The meetings were rewarding.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	The development of the publication was a worthwhile task.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	The tasks undertaken between meetings were useful.	5	4	3	2	1
Evaluation of study group facilitation and assistance						
1.	The AEL, CWM, and VEA facilitators enabled the group to define and pursue direction.	5	4	3	2	1

		Agree				Disagree
2.	The facilitators provided adequate communication throughout the process.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	The facilitators provided adequate technical assistance.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	The facilitators scheduled an appropriate number of meetings.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	The facilitators encouraged involvement and collaboration.	5	4	3	2	1

Evaluation of my role in the study group

1.	I felt committed to exploring the issue of inclusion.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	I thought about the issue and discussed it with others between meetings.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	I carefully read the materials provided between meetings.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	I completed all assigned tasks to the best of my ability.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	I approached the study group experience as an opportunity, not an inconvenience.	5	4	3	2	1

What other comments or recommendations do you have regarding the inclusion study group?

Thank you for completing and returning this form to Jane Hange. You've helped AEL, VEA, and CWM improve assistance to future study groups.

APPENDIX C

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FORM

APPENDIX C

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FORM

Major roles and responsibilities	Who is responsible?			
	Teacher____	Teacher____	Teaching Assistant____	Other____
Developing IEPS's				
Assigning responsibilities for and supervising paraprofessionals				
Individualizing curriculum				
Developing & teaching units/ projects/etc.				
Monitoring student progress				
Assigning grades				
Scheduling and facilitating team meeting				
Collaboration with parents				
Collaboration with related personnel				
Facilitating peer supports/ friendship development				
Other?				

P=Primary Responsibility (but actively seeks and receives input from others)
S=Secondary Responsibility
E=Equal Responsibility
I=Input in Decisionmaking

Inclusive Education Project/90

APPENDIX D

COLLABORATIVE TEACHING INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

APPENDIX D

COLLABORATIVE TEACHING INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

Coteachers ____________________ Class __________ Week of ____________________

	Lesson Description & Student Outcomes	Description of Coteaching Responsibilities		Comments/Needs
		General Educator	Special Educator	

Collaborative Teaching Program, 1996

Adapted from Cooperative Teaching Instructional Plan, Baltimore, 1993

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Appalachia Educational Laboratory
Product Quality Evaluation Form

Inclusion of Special Needs Students: Lessons from Experience

A. Background

1. Name: ____________________

2. School/District: ____________________

3. Position: ____________________

4. State: ____________________

B. Rating

This form asks you to evaluate this product on a series of product quality scales. Please mark your response to each item with an "X" at any point along the scale. If you cannot reply to any scale, please check the "Cannot Reply" option for that item.

1. How clearly presented was the information in this material? ____ Cannot reply

Unclear Very clear
/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

2. How credible was the information in this material? ____ Cannot reply

Not credible Very credible
/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

3. How useful was the information in this material? ____ Cannot reply

Not useful Very useful
/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

4. How easy was it for you to get this material? ____ Cannot reply

Difficult Very easy
/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

5. Which sections of the report have you found helpful? Please explain briefly how these sections helped you.

6. Have you shared your copy with other educators? ____ Yes ____ No
If so, how many? ____

7. In what ways have you used this product? (Check any that apply.)

- ____ Personal professional development
- ____ Used in teaching
- ____ Quoted in a report
- ____ Others, please describe
- ____ Used in a meeting/presentation
- ____ Quoted in a newsletter/publication (Title: ____________________)
- ____ Used to develop/revise program or curriculum

8. How did you learn of the availability of this report?

9. Other suggestions or comments regarding this product:

Thank you for completing this evaluation/contribution form.
Please fold, staple, stamp, and mail to AEL.

- -

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Here

AEL
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325